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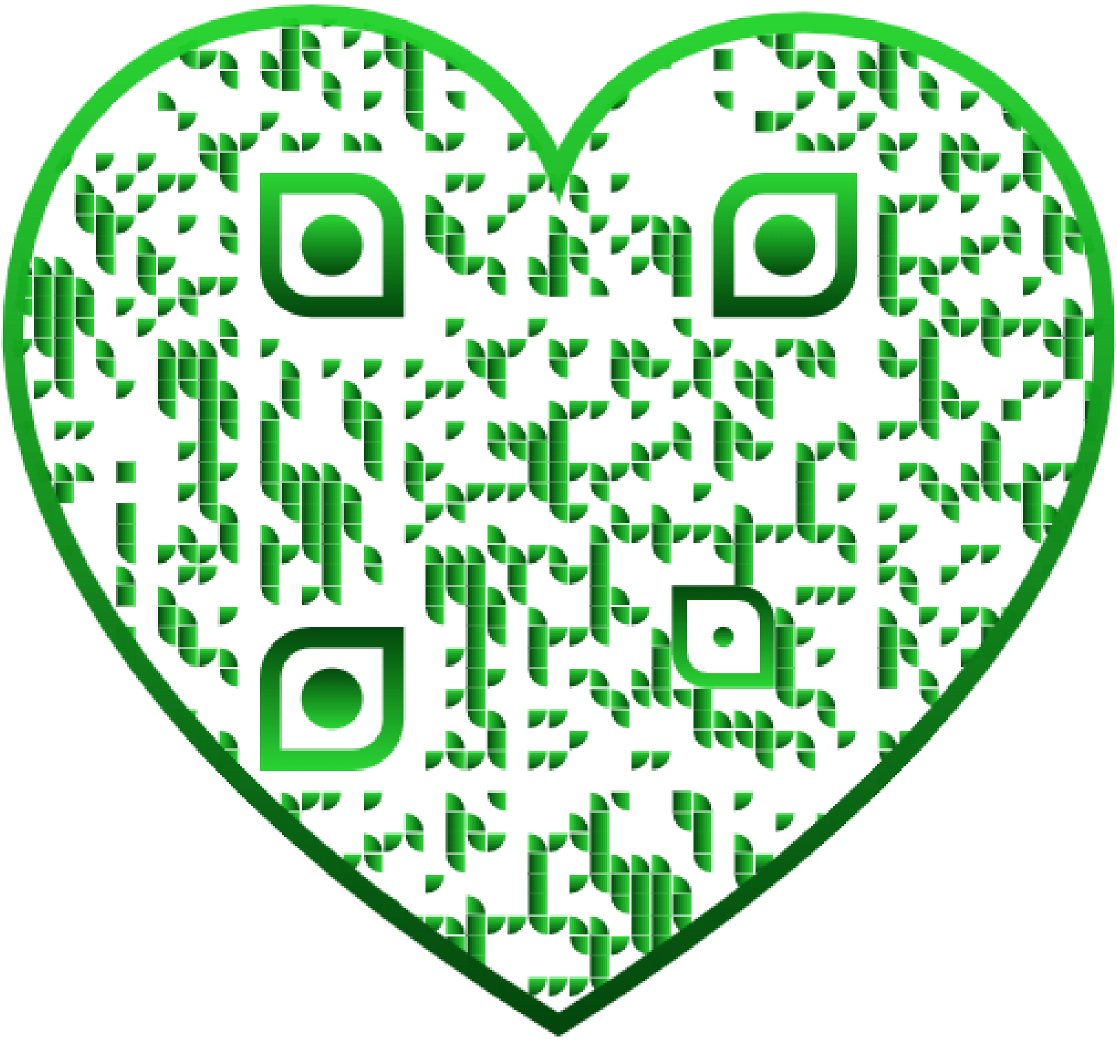
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2025
VOLUME 98 NUMBER 6



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ON THE COVER
The Sylvan M-5 CLZ DC is a sleek, sporty pontoon that delivers high entertainment value on the water.
Photo: Bill Doster

SUNK COSTS
Fiberglass boats never die. But what happens when they are abandoned?
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PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE
Antique- and classic-boat restoration captures the joy of the boating culture.
BY JOHN TIGER
P.80

FORMULA

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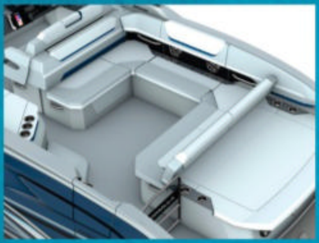

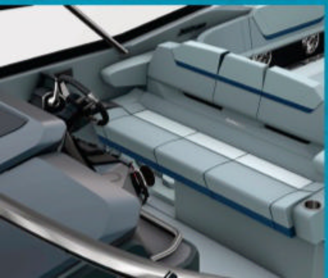

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PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) JIM HENDRICKS, COURTESY MINN KOTA,
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KEVIN FALVEY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / DIRECTOR, BOATING AND WATERSPORTS **kevin.falvey@firecrown.com**
PETE MCDONALD EXECUTIVE EDITOR
SUE WHITNEY MANAGING EDITOR
RYAN SWANSON ART DIRECTOR
JIM HENDRICKS ELECTRONICS AND WEST COAST EDITOR
CINDY MARTIN COPY EDITOR
JON WHITTLE STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

EDITOR AT LARGE
RANDY VANCE FISHING AND MARINE GROUP

CONTRIBUTORS
Karl Anderson, Dan Armitage, Ron Ballanti, Tim Barker, Zenon Bilas, Tim Bower, Capt. Chris Caswell, Dean Travis Clarke, Garrett Cortese, Capt. Vincent Daniello, Marilyn DeMartini, Bill Doster, Phil Draper, Ken Englert, Michael Folkerts, Peter Frederiksen, Joe Friedman, Ben Greenwood, Steve Griffin, Michael "Mick" Hannock, Jim Hatch, Colin Hayes, Jeff Hemmel, Forest Johnson, Rich Johnson, Alan Jones, Tom King, Craig Kotilinek, John Linn, Charles Plueddeman, Capt. John N. Raguso, Lenny Rudow, Tom Schlichter, Rick Shackleton, Ed Sherman, Heather Steinberger, Zach Stovall, John Tiger Jr., Capt. John Page Williams

EDITORIAL OPERATIONS
SHAWN BEAN CREATIVE STUDIO
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CINDY MARTIN COPY CHIEF
BRIAN DAUGHERTY DIGITAL PRODUCER
KELLY WEEKLEY PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
STEPHANIE FRY CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
PETE COFFIN PRODUCTION MANAGER / ARTIST

JOHN MCEVER PUBLISHER / BRAND MANAGER **john.mcever@firecrown.com**
RHONDA MOCK DIRECTOR, BRAND STRATEGY **rhonda.mock@firecrown.com**
BILL SIMKINS MARKETPLACE / ACCOUNT MANAGER **bill.simkins@firecrown.com**
NOREEN MURRAY MARKETPLACE / SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER **noreen.murray@firecrown.com**
VANESSA LUQUIS MARKETING MANAGER, BOATING AND WAKEBOARDING **vanessa.luquis@firecrown.com**

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By Kevin Falvey

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Summertime, and the living's easy.

This issue hits your mailbox about mid-July. That means I hope it ends up on the bottom of that pile of mail on your hall table or kitchen counter. At least for a little while.

July is high season. The days are long, the sun is strong, and by now you've likely sorted out any of those petty, early-season problems and tasks that seem to plague all boaters at times. The replacement of expired flares. The mysterious bogging down that was thought to be a costly fuel-system or engine problem and ended up being a silly bug nest in the vent fitting. The patching of the tow toys. The burned-out bulb. The horn that won't sound, the pump that won't pump, the latch that won't latch.

I know you know what I mean. By now, *Mom's Mink* is probably shipshape, the weather's fine and, best of all, there's loads of boating season left. Promise might be boating's greatest gift, and July is a promise that August is bound to keep.

Make your plans, my fellow boaters!

Rig up for that record catch. Organize that cruise up the coast or that boat-camping trip on an out-of-state lake. Schedule three mornings per week to work on your slalom technique, barefooting, or new wakesurfing tricks. Tow the boat up to someplace you've never boated before. Those who regularly boat inland can venture to the salt chuck, while coastal boaters can invest a weekend in learning about lake life. Promise yourself more boating time, because time spent aboard is time well spent.

> By now, *Mom's Mink* is probably shipshape, the weather's fine and, best of all, there's loads of boating season left. Promise might be boating's greatest gift, and July is a promise that August is bound to keep.

Personally, I'll be promising myself more family time on the boat. Both of my children will attend college in the fall. My time with them grows scarcer as each July passes. Before this summer ends, we'll catch a few more fish, tow the tube, take the boat to dinner, and maybe hit Block Island for a couple of nights. The time is now.

"Promise" is an elastic word. Used, as I did in the first few paragraphs of this article, the word is a way to convey expectation and bolster hope. Used, as I did in the paragraph that precedes this one, promise represents a commitment. Both usages transcend definition and instead impart meaning. In this case, the meaning is a love both for family and for boats, and for the synergistic way in which the boating lifestyle is not part of our family's lifestyle but *is* our family's lifestyle.

I encourage you to follow our example. You won't regret it.

There are many ways in which one can spend time with those they care about. All sorts of destinations and activities vie for our time and attention. I'm not here to tell anybody that boating is the only way to get that sought-after quality time. I simply assert that one of the best ways to get it—the way in which I get it—is aboard a boat.

Enjoy the issue.

Kevin Falvey

Kevin Falvey, Editor-in-Chief
editor@boatingmag.com

SUNK COSTS
Turn of a Dream

ABANDONED SHIPS
Turn to page 74 to read "Sunk Costs," in which the author explores the growing problems of ADV, or abandoned and derelict vessels.

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To read the full interview online, scan this tag or go to boatingmag.com/jimpearson.

Jim Pearson

USCG Auxiliarist, Aquatic Film Consultant, and US Navy Diver

Jim Pearson has done so much in and around the water throughout his life, it's hard to know where to start. A Vietnam veteran, Pearson served as a US Navy Diver with Naval Special Operations Deep Sea while overseas twice, and then, once stateside, as a police team divemaster. Pearson eventually parlayed his dive experience and boating skillset into a Southern California business. Cinema-Aquatics (cinema-aquatics.com) offers specialized underwater cameras and cameramen, boats, and film props for waterborne motion-picture productions. His firm—he is president and CEO—provides technical advisers, on-water safety and stunt coordinators, safety divers, and more for the film industry. Amid all this, Texas-born Pearson has still found time to volunteer as a US Coast Guard Auxiliarist, formerly serving as a Division Commander and currently as Division Staff Officer of Surface Operations for the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys of Southern California. *—Jim Hendricks*

How did you get started in the film industry?
Not all actors are comfortable on the water and might have no idea as to boating safety. I saw a need for a company that could help ensure safety for actors and everyone while filming on the water.

What film/TV productions have you worked on?
Some of the most recognizable include *CSI*, *U.S. Marshals*, *Star Trek: Generations*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Indecent Proposal*, *24*, *Shark Week*, *Melrose Place*, *Wings*, *Call of Duty: Ghosts* and *Beverly Hills, 90210*.

Which production proved most challenging?
One was *G.I. Jane*. We were required to recover multiple swimmers in a straight line without stopping. As we got up to speed, the port outboard touched a sandbar, pushing us off course. I managed to put us back on course, but the first swimmer loomed directly ahead. I veered to starboard, and my two crewmen caught the swimmer. To this day, in my dreams, I can still feel the tension.

What kind of boat do you have?
I own 13 boats for film productions, including a 30-foot RIB, a 27-foot cruiser, 25-foot camera platform craft, and multiple PWCs.

What led you to the US Coast Guard Auxiliary?
I took a boating-safety class taught by the Auxiliary 21 years ago, and membership caught my interest. I soon became an Auxiliarist; the Auxiliary makes me better professionally and for recreation.

PHOTO: JIM HENDRICKS

TRAILER REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

It's always wise to inspect and perform repairs to your boat's trailer, even during boating season. In fact, many who moor or dock their boats for the season have a great opportunity to repair their trailers while the boat's in the water. Here are some trailer-repair basics.

—*John Tiger* (Answers on page 20)

1. Your trailer lights operate, but they occasionally blink on and off, and often are not bright—they dim when plugged into your tow vehicle. What can you do to troubleshoot?

A. **Install a new trailer-light kit with LED lights and new wiring. Don't waste time messing with an old system with old wires.**
B. **Check the ground for all trailer lights first—this is a very common trouble spot.**
C. **Install a ground wire (white wire in the trailer harness) directly to the trailer frame with a screw, locknut and washers. Often the white ground wire is not connected at all, and the trailer-hitch ball is used as the ground connection to the tow vehicle. This causes intermittent and poor connection.**
D. **All of the above**
E. **A and B**

2. What are ways you should check your trailer for road worthiness?

A. **Visual inspection of the frame, axle, and springs for excessive rust, damage, and stress bending.**
B. **Check tires for excessive and/or abnormal wear patterns.**
C. **Check the coupler and safety chains for proper operation, rust, and binding.**
D. **Check wheel bearings for slop, wobble, and grinding noises as you spin each wheel over.**
E. **All of the above**

9.17 million

The number of SUVs and pickup trucks sold in the US in 2024, accounting for a record 75 percent of vehicle sales.

3. Are hull tie-downs necessary?

A. **Only for long trips. If you're just towing a few miles to the local ramp, they're not necessary.**
B. **Always. The hull should be secured to the trailer not only with the winch strap and a safety chain to bow eye, but always with tie-downs at the transom as well.**
C. **Not if you have a bunk trailer.**
D. **Not if your trailer has side bunk guides to keep the hull centered on the trailer.**
E. **A and B are both correct.**

4. If you have a galvanized trailer, how can you keep it from rusting?

A. **There is no way to keep rust from forming; just let it go, and when it's time, buy a new trailer.**
B. **Use Cold Galvanize spray in a can; wire brush and clean away loose rust, then spray with Cold Galvanize to protect the trailer metal.**
C. **Don't wash your boat on the trailer with caustic or acidic agents to remove bottom grime (for example, Mary Kate On-Off) without thoroughly flushing and rinsing the trailer with clean water.**
D. **Don't drill any holes in the trailer frame without coating the drilled hole with Cold Galvanize.**
E. **All of the above**
F. **B, C and D**

5. If your trailer brakes are not working properly, what could be a possible cause?

A. **Coupler/master cylinder is corroded and frozen up, so it won't actuate.**
B. **Brake fluid has leaked out.**
C. **Brake line(s) corroded, perforated and/or broken.**
D. **All of the above**
E. **A and B**

6. You're looking at a new trailer, and it comes with torsio-axle suspension. What could be the advantages of this suspension versus a leaf-spring suspension?

A. **None. There are no detectable advantages.**
B. **Torsion suspension has no springs to make noise, rust and wear out.**
C. **Torsion axles can be softer and bounce less, making your boat's ride smoother.**
D. **B and C**
E. **The trailer's paint will last longer.**
F. **None of the above**

PHOTO: BILL DOSTER; SOURCE FOR STATISTIC: THESHOPMAG.COM

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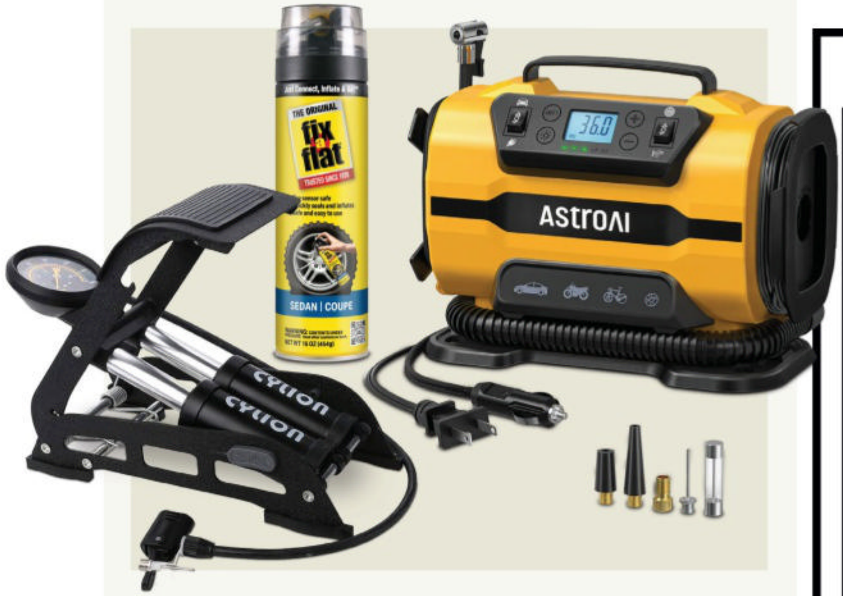


TRAILER-TIRE INFLATORS

Death, taxes, and getting a flat on your trailer at the least convenient time—just a few of life's inevitabilities that come into play. If it's not a blowout or a severe puncture, and a little air will do the trick to get you back en route to the boat ramp. Here are three solutions for inflating your trailer tires. —*Pete McDonald*

MANUAL PUMP
WUYASTA DOUBLE-CYLINDER FOOT AIR PUMP

THE FILL: While intended primarily for bicycle tires, a foot pump can do the trick in an emergency situation. All it takes is a little manpower; step on the pedal repeatedly to deliver up to 160 psi of inflating capability. An analog gauge displays the tire's psi as you pump. It's foldable, so it's easy to store in an SUV or pickup-truck bed.

THE CHILL: It requires effort and for a full-on flat—especially on your tow vehicle or a trailer carrying a heavy boat—it could take a lot of time to provide enough air to make it road-ready.

PRICE: $27.99; amazon.com

AEROSOL
FIX-A-FLAT TIRE INFLATOR AND SEALANT

THE FILL: The 24-ounce spray can will fit in any size tow vehicle without taking up too much space. While the others merely refill your tire with air, this can actually seal a puncture up to a quarter-inch in diameter. Shake the can, attach the included hose onto the tire valve and press, and it will add air and a chemical liner to internally seal the puncture so that you can safely drive away for service.

THE CHILL: It's a single-use product and might not have enough juice to inflate a fully deflated tire.

PRICE: $19.99 (24 oz. for a truck/SUV); fixaflat.com

ELECTRIC PUMP
ASTROAI DIGITAL TIRE INFLATOR

THE FILL: If you're prepared and keep this in your tow vehicle, it's probably the best choice for quick tire inflation. The AstroAI comes equipped with a 12-volt cigarette-lighter-style plug-in and a 120-volt AC two-prong plug-in, and the digital display gives you an accurate readout of your tire's psi as you fill. It also comes with several adapters, so you can use it for inflating tubes or balls or other inflatables.

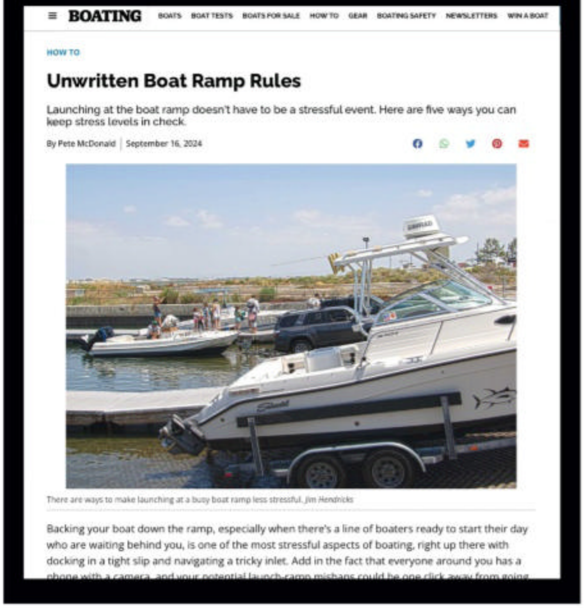
THE CHILL: You'll need a 12-volt or an AC power source and likely an extension cord on hand to reach the trailer tires.

PRICE: $59.99; astroai.com

ONLINE THIS MONTH

BOAT-RAMP ETIQUETTE

Boating season is in full swing, and this month we deal with all things related to trailering your boat. Because that includes launching and returning to the boat ramp, be sure to follow our unwritten rules for boat-ramp etiquette. Scan this tag or visit boatingmag.com/how-to/unwritten-boat-ramp-rules.



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HOW TO

Unwritten Boat Ramp Rules

Launching at the boat ramp doesn't have to be a stressful event. Here are five ways you can keep stress levels in check.

By Pete McDonald | September 16, 2024

There are ways to make launching at a busy boat ramp less stressful. Jim Hendricks

Backing your boat down the ramp, especially when there's a line of boaters ready to start their day who are waiting behind you, is one of the most stressful aspects of boating, right up there with docking in a tight slip and navigating a tricky inlet. Add in the fact that everyone around you has a phone with a camera, and your potential launch-ramp mishaps could be one click away from going

CAPTAIN'S TEST ANSWERS

(Answers from page 18)

1. D. All the answers are correct and can be sources of trailer-light problems.
2. E. All are valid checks to ensure road worthiness and safer towing.
3. B. Tie-downs are always necessary, even for short trips and even when the boat is securely cradled by the trailer bunks and side guides.
4. F. B, C and D are all good ways to help prevent rust from ruining your galvanized trailer.
5. D. All are correct. All could be possible causes of hydraulic surge brake failure on a trailer.
6. D. B and C are both proven advantages that a torsion-axle suspension trailer offers.

CAPTAIN'S TESTS ONLINE

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See her live at the Cannes Yachting Festival in September 2025 or the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show in October 2025, or scan the QR code to sign up for more details!

Because out there, wonder awaits.

By Kevin Falvey

FOUR WINNS
H33

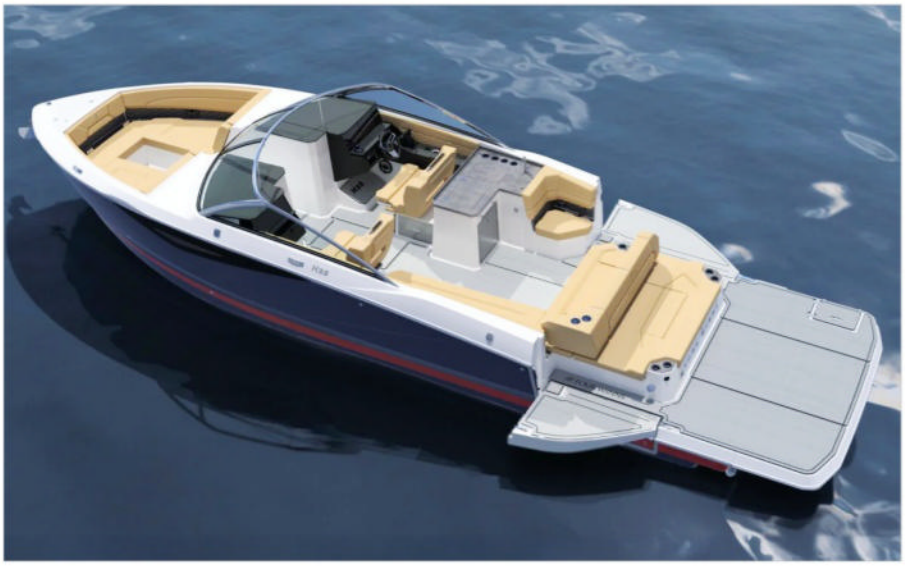

PHOTO: COURTESY FOUR WINNS BOATS

Launching formally at this October's Fort Lauderdale Boat Show, the Four Winns H33 offers unparalleled water access and entertaining, thanks to not one, but two, foldout cockpit terraces that expand space aboard exponentially.

The H33 features a distinctive upright stem, cross-curved windshield and reverse sheer. It also stands out for offering a choice of either twin outboard or single sterndrive power. Considerations include the unobstructed transom platform on the sterndrive version, while an optional Seakeeper gyrostabilizer is available for the outboard version.

The L-shaped cockpit lounge with sun pad and electric backrest boasts premium stitching and soft textures. An optional hardtop, with electric awning, creates shaded comfort. Enjoy a fully equipped galley (grill, sink and fridge).

Find two private bow lounges, and in the starboard-side cabin, you'll discover an area for changing, space for a nap, and a head. At the helm, twin 12-inch touchscreen MFDs, joystick control and more offer the captain a commanding place of prominence.

We'll be testing this boat. Look for our complete report to come, which will include pricing, which was not available as we went to press.

· **LOA:** 33'0" · **BEAM:** 9'4" · **DISPLACEMENT (APPROX.):** NA · **FUEL CAPACITY:** 160 gal.

FOUR WINNS BOATS
Cadillac, Michigan; fourwinns.com

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By Kevin Falvey

CHAPARRAL
SSX 8

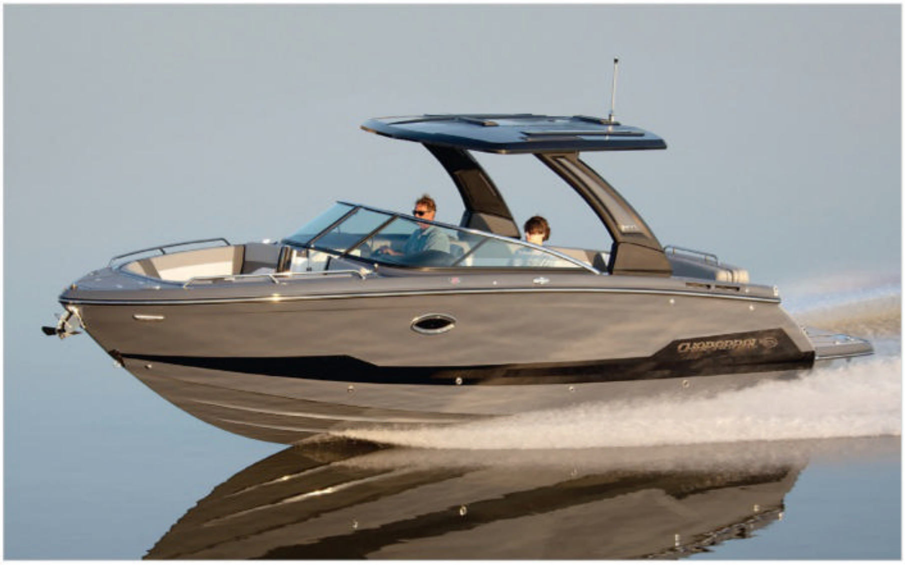


PHOTO: COURTESY CHAPARRAL BOATS

Instead of abruptly terminating aft, as do those of most outboard boats, this big bowrider's attractive lines seem to carry on to infinity, implying unlimited adventure and fun. Good boat design bespeaks its mission.

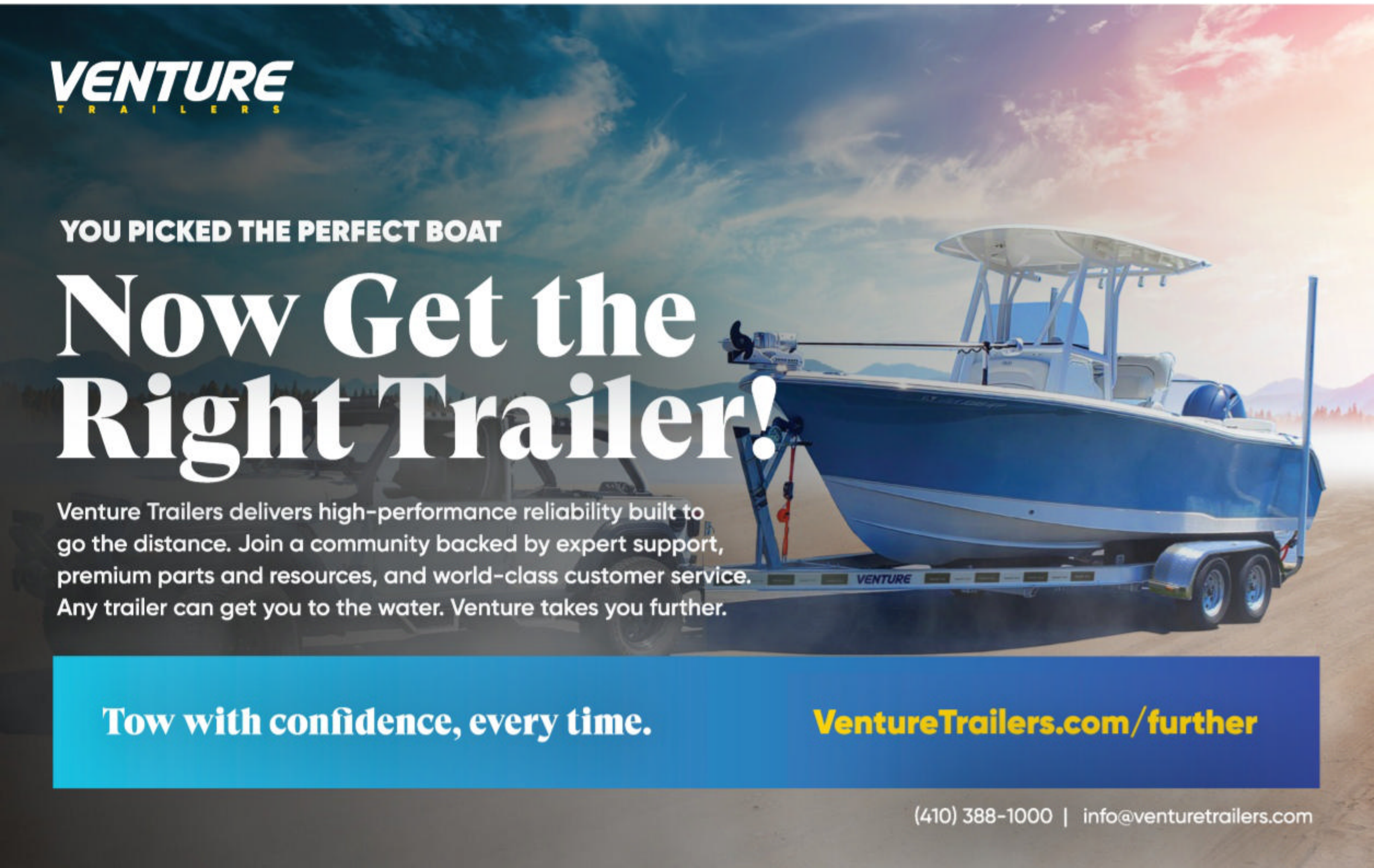
Practically speaking, the boat's wide-open transom provides unfettered water access. Whether it's tubing, skiing, foiling or just lounging about, a big platform is hard to beat. Plus, Chaparral offers its standard, patented Infinity Power Step—a deployable step that extends into the water, making boarding easy, even for pets. (Infinity Power Step also makes a great semisubmerged seat.) This platform enhances dockside entertaining as well.

Inside, we applaud Chaparral for inventing the most convenient helm seat controls. These allow for easy adjustment of swivel and fore-and-aft movement. Besides, the upholstery overall is luxurious and high-quality. The cockpit is on one level featuring a diamond nonskid sole. Option up for SeaDek flooring.

Choose a single Mercury or Volvo Penta sterndrive to 430 hp. At press time, its MSRP with a 380 hp Mercury 8.2 L DTS Bravo 3X catalyst is $212,387. Look for our certified boat test on the Chaparral SSX 8 coming soon.

· **LOA:** 28'0" · **BEAM:** 8'6" · **DISPLACEMENT (APPROX.):** 5,900 lb. · **FUEL CAPACITY:** 80 gal.

CHAPARRAL BOATS
Nashville, Georgia; chaparralboats.com



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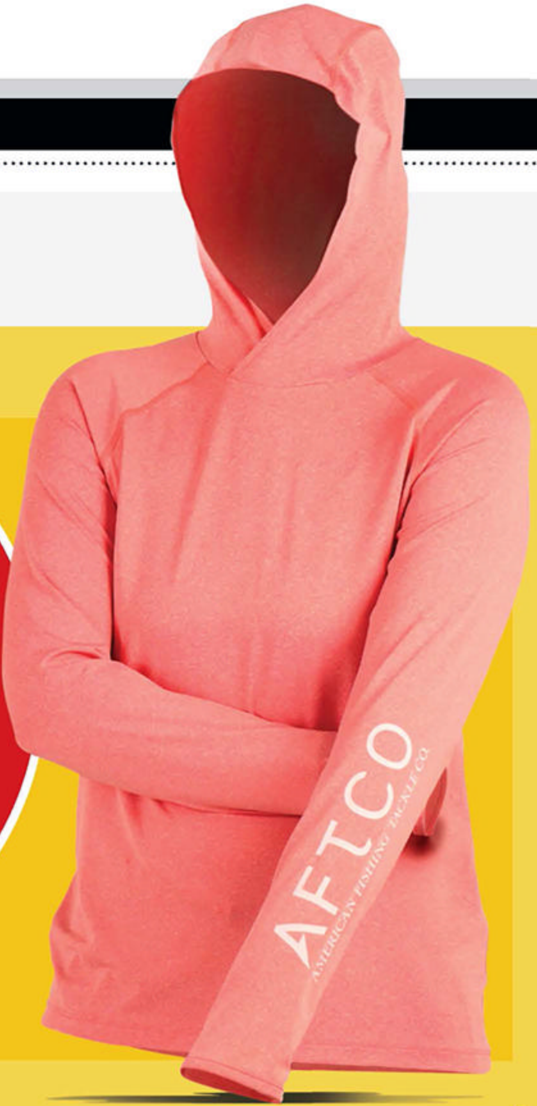
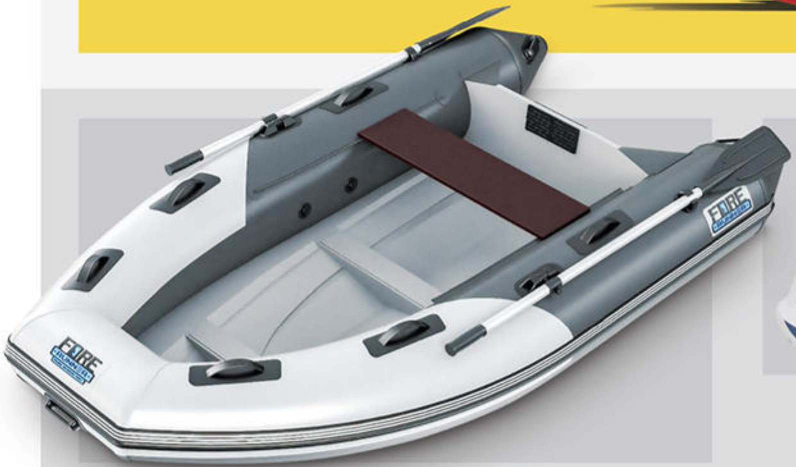


AFTCO WOMEN'S SAMURAI 2.0 HOODIE

The Women's Samurai 2.0 from AFTCO offers UPF-50 sun protection, Teflon EcoElite DWR stain resistance and moisture-wicking qualities to protect boaters from sunup to sundown. This relaxed-fit hoodie is made from 92 percent recycled polyester fabric and features thumb holes in the cuffs to protect hands from sun damage. Available in soft coral heather, dusk heather, and oyster gray heather in women's sizes XS through XL. $39; aftco.com

LIQUI MOLY MARINE 4T SHOOTER

Marine 4T Shooter from Liqui Moly removes deposits on gasoline engine port injectors, carburetors, valves, plugs and combustion chambers, making start-ups easier and offering protection against wear, corrosion, and carbon buildup. It is safe for turbochargers, catalytic converters and GPF filters. Just pour it into a fuel tank with a convenient spout that screws onto the can, and it self-mixes into the fuel. A 6.7-ounce can treats up to 18 gallons of fuel. $9.49; liqui-moly.com



FORE RUNNER FOLDING ADVENTURE CRAFT

The folding inflatable RIBs from Fore Runner Craft are designed to uniquely fold and unfold in minutes to serve as easy-to-transport tenders in a boat or vehicle. Available in a 9-foot-6-inch model (290AS) and an 11-foot-3-inch version (340AS), these boats feature durable rigid fiberglass hulls and decks, and are claimed to be sturdy enough for offshore waters. Tubes feature robust German materials and double-welded seams. $4,050 (290AS), $4,750 (340AS); forerunnercraft.com

DRYRUN WATERPROOF FOOTWEAR

Fishooz DryRun footwear from DryShod includes waterproof slip-on ankle boots and sneakers featuring contoured internal shanks for full arch support and a molded and removable PU sock liner to ensure all-day comfort. A natural rubber shell surrounds a 100 percent waterproof neoprene outer. Toe and heel reinforcements protect against deck hazards. A lightweight Dureva outsole minimizes fatigue, while the Starliner tread offers traction in wet conditions. Available in men's sizes 7 through 14 in splotch/blue, ghost/white and blue/white. $119.95 for ankle boots, $109.95 for sneakers; dryshodusa.com

PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) COURTESY AFTCO, COURTESY LIQUI MOLY, COURTESY DRYRUN, COURTESY FORE RUNNER

POWERWINCH PREMIER 2000 TRAILER WINCH

The Powerwinch Premier Series 2000 trailer winch is engineered with precision-plated gears, a retrieve ratio of 4.75-to-1, and a 12-tooth ratchet gear—all to help ensure easy, smooth operation. It also uses a patent-pending dual-pawl ratcheting system for optimal load distribution. The 2-inch-wide-by-20-foot-long polyester web strap has a working load capacity of 2,000 pounds and a 6,000-pound breaking strength. This winch features powder-coated, die-cast aluminum covers and an oversize steel frame. $225; powerwinch.myshopify.com

SANI/FLEX ODOR SHIELD HOSE

Raritan makes replacing marine sanitation lines easier with the Sani/Flex Odor Shield marine hose. The flexible 1- and 1.5-inch hose material bends around tight corners without kinking for faster installations. The hose is manufactured from a premium butyl-rubber compound for maximum odor airtightness. Reinforced with double-helix steel wire and synthetic textile yarn, the smoothbore hose has a maximum pressure value of 105 psi and a 315 psi burst rating, and is extremely resistant to collapsing from pump suction. The outside is vanilla-scented. Starting at $15.75 per foot; raritaneng.com

SANI/FLEX ODOR SHIELD 10 YEAR WARRANTY BUTYL W.P. 100 PSI ISO
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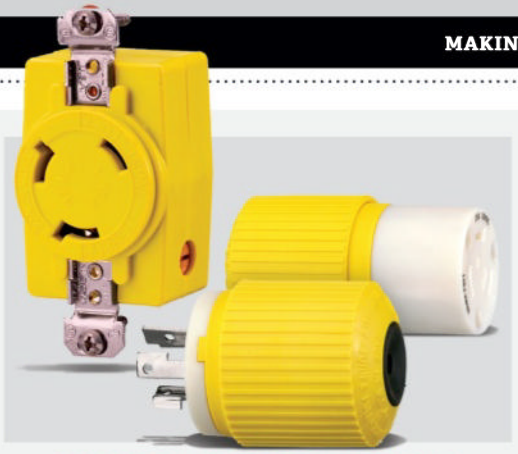


HUBBELL ELECTRIC-REEL SYSTEM

The Hubbell DC system for electric fishing reels includes a 30-amp corrosion-resistant plug, female connector body, and locking receptacle that is applicable for use with all 12-, 24-, and 32-volt fishing reels. Rated at 28 volts DC, the unique configuration prevents accidentally plugging into an AC-rated power supply. It uses nickel-plated contacts for corrosion resistance, and integral rear seals on plugs and connectors protect internal components from dust and debris. $43.99; hubbell-marine.com

BECKSON KAYAK AND CANOE PUMP

The Beckson Thirsty-Mate kayak and canoe pump is a great way to dewater a paddle craft or any other small boat. This light and compact hand pump measures 18 inches long by 1.75 inches in diameter, and can remove 8 gallons of water per minute. Without any metal components, the self-priming, self-lubricating pump is virtually corrosion-proof. The included Float-A-Pump sleeve ensures that it won't sink if dropped overboard. $64.80; beckson.com

SIERRA DELUXE PLUS TRAILER JACK

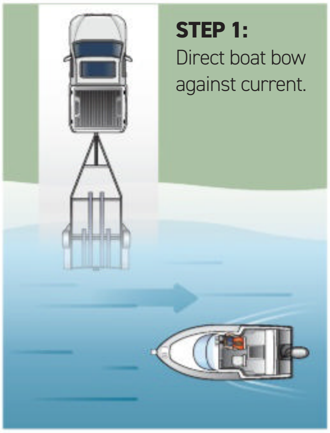
Designed and built to stringent OEM boat-trailer specifications, the Sierra Deluxe Plus swivel-mounted tongue jack is rated at 1,500-pound capacity, telescopes 12 inches, and easily pivots into a horizontal position for towing. A zinc-plated undercoat, with a tough black textured overcoat, provides corrosion protection. It is designed to fit tongues up to 3-by-5 inches, and features built-in grease fittings for easy lubrication. $178.99; westmarine.com

PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) COURTESY POWERWINCH, COURTESY HUBBELL, COURTESY SIERRA, COURTESY BECKSON, COURTESY RARITAN

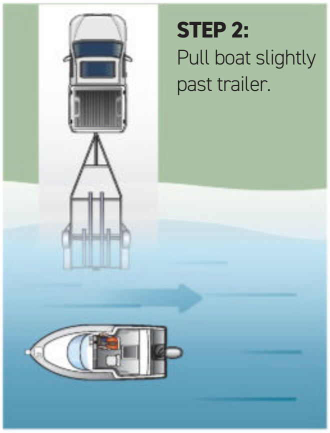
By Kevin Falvey

HOW TO LOAD A BOAT ON A TRAILER IN A CROSSCURRENT

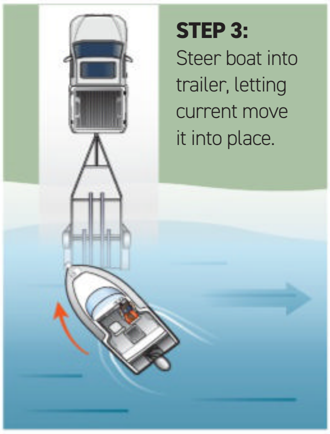
Balancing thrust, current strength and a good plan are keys to this task.



STEP 1: Direct boat bow against current.



STEP 2: Pull boat slightly past trailer.



STEP 3: Steer boat into trailer, letting current move it into place.

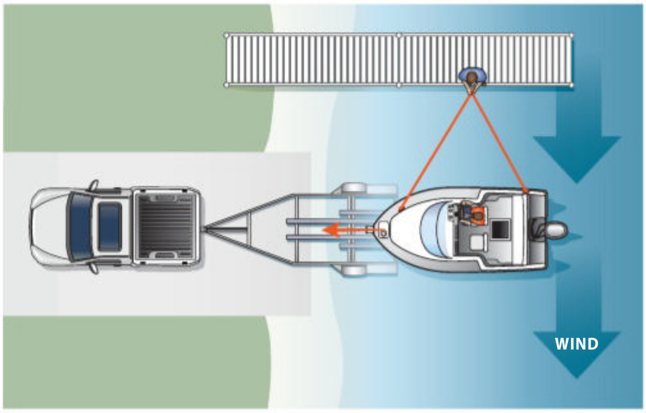
> The first thing to do when loading a boat on a trailer in a crosscurrent is to make your approach from downstream. You have much more control when the bow is facing into the flow.

Many, if not most, boat-launch ramps are situated so as to be somewhat sheltered from strong currents.

Not all ramps offer this convenience, though. At some point, you might find yourself needing to load your boat back on the trailer while fighting a strong crossing current. Those in tidal areas can be a headache. Those on rivers can be a real challenge.

You can make this task easier to begin with even before you are actually loading on the boat. If possible, back the trailer down so that it is angled away from the current. This allows you to approach it more into the current with the boat, and so in more control. Another tip is to back the trailer down just enough to get the boat on. Back in too deep, and your stern could swing off, even if your approach is brilliant. Finally, side guides installed on the trailer are a big plus, and they really help.

Additionally, if there is an upstream dock, have a mate stand on the dock with two long lines. Get a line on the boat's bow and stern. Then have the mate let out the lines until you are lined up with the trailer. Power slowly toward the trailer while the mate walks alongside tending the lines.



Experience in handling your boat is another key to loading a boat on a trailer in a crossing current. Knowing just how much power it takes to stem (stay in place against) a given-strength current and how much drift (sideways movement) to expect as you make a turn broadside to the stream will serve you well when loading in a crosscurrent. If you are a new boater, proceed with even extra caution. Technique and gear can also help. Let's load up!

The first thing to do when loading a boat on a trailer in a crosscurrent is to make your approach from downstream. You have more control when the bow is facing into the flow.

Stem the current at a spot downflow from the ramp, and assess the situation. This lets you get a feel for the current's strength—and thus, its potential impact on your boat—before you make the turn toward the trailer. It also allows you to see if the way is clear of other boats. Do-overs prove dicey in this situation, so don't commit until the way is clear.

Once you've got a feel for the current and the way is clear, proceed upstream at a controlled rate. Don't begin your turn toward the ramp until it is directly opposite you. Proceed onto the trailer.

Know that it is easier to make corrections if you are slightly downcurrent while headed for the trailer because you can angle your bow slightly into the stream and feather the throttle to stay on target. Correcting while upstream and broadside rarely works out well.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ELISABETH KELLY / FIRECROWN

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Q&A

By
Michael "Mick" Hannock

SkegGuard
www.skegguard.com

FIN-TASTIC Outboard skegs can be repaired by welding or by DIY boaters using repair parts such as this SkegGuard and other variants.

PAINT THE SKEG

Q: Dear Boat Doctor, we took some paint off the skeg of our sterndrive while visiting a local sandbar. It's not that we ran aground hard; we just rubbed it in the sand coming in. Should we repaint it? Will our lower unit corrode without paint on the skeg?

Jackson and Vera Osgood
Via internet

A: Sounds like the damage is merely cosmetic. While the paint does provide some level of protection for the aluminum, your drive isn't going to corrode away because of this. Still, I recommend repainting it when you have the chance. Your engine-maker, as well as companies such as Pettit Paint, offer what you need to get the job done. An epoxy primer, such as Pettit Protect, makes an excellent foundation for recoating aluminum. For more on primering aluminum, visit boatingmag.com/how-to/painting-a-boats-aluminum-fuel-tank.

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WATER CAN PERMEATE THE LAYERS MORE EASILY
FIBERGLASS
COMPETITOR
4 LAYERS OF LOW CONCENTRATION MICA
WHAT CAUSES BLISTERING?

PHOTOS: (FROM TOP) COURTESY WEST MARINE, COURTESY PETTIT PAINT

RETRACT THE JACK Some trailer-boaters crank up the tongue jack as high as possible while the boat is stored, thus hoping gravity drains any rainfall or other errant water from the deck and bilge. However, leaving the telescoping leg fully extended for long periods puts horizontal stresses on the screw jack and gears, and subjects the telescoping leg to the elements and corrosion. Either can lead to premature failure of the jack. If you feel the need to create more elevation, instead, keep the jack mostly retracted. Then use a separate jack to raise the trailer tongue, and place two or more 2-by-6 wood blocks under the wheel or foot of the tongue jack to raise the bow higher. And remember, when disconnecting and jacking up the trailer tongue from the tow-vehicle hitch, always chock the trailer tires to prevent the rig from rolling away. —*Jim Hendricks*

POWERWINCH PREMIER 2000 MANUAL TRAILER WINCH

Why spend $75 to $100 more than a conventional galvanized-steel trailer winch? After testing this one, we can give you several reasons.

Our out-of-the-box inspection revealed several superior features. The cast-aluminum housing and oversize 8-inch cast-aluminum crank handle are powder-coated, not thinly galvanized. Under that housing is a durable steel chassis and gear system, also powder-coated for corrosion resistance. The chassis's concealed working gear and the loading gear have a powerful, easy-to-turn 4.75-to-1 gear ratio. Instead of an exposed, finger-pinching ratchet latch lever, the ratchet reversal mechanism is concealed within the housing, just like the rest of the working parts. An easily operated twist knob rotates from forward to reverse to free-spool, and it has a grease fitting to keep it simple to operate. The housing shields much of the 2-inch web-strap spool from sun damage. The winch axles have stainless-steel ball bearings. The winch handle has bronze bushings, so it remains free to turn even in corrosive saltwater environments. The gears are the same precisely engineered gears used in Powerwinch's electric winches; just cranking the winch on the bench indicated that this is a well-engineered, precisely assembled system.

Installation was a little challenging. Universal mounting holes in the winch fit most trailers, but ours required a file to lengthen one bolt slot, an unlikely event for most users, per the manufacturer.

At the ramp, we twisted the ratchet lever to free-spool the strap roller and easily pulled out enough strap to connect the hook to the bow eye. After flicking the knob over again, we began winding in the boat. Precise gearing was evident. Ball bearings reduced the amount of pressure needed on the crank to overcome friction. The crank handle—2 inches longer than the factory norm—did not interfere with the loaded boat as we feared, and provided substantial leverage and ease in loading the boat.

We thought it was an excellent addition to our rig, easing trailering duties and saving more energy for the better aspects of boating. $225; powerwinch.com —*Randy Vance*

PHOTO: COURTESY POWERWINCH

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WE TEST STUFF

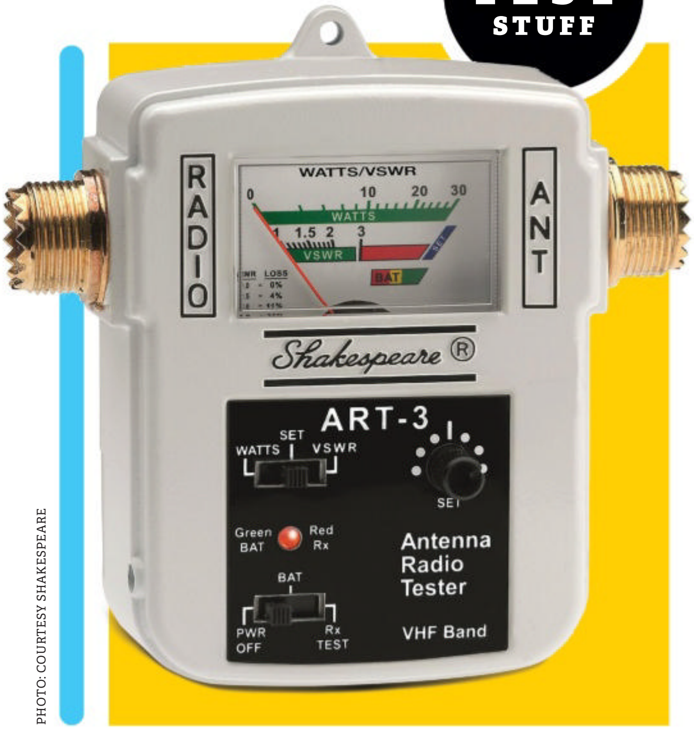

PHOTO: COURTESY SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE ANTENNA/RADIO TESTER

Testing this piece of test equipment proved to be an interesting project. That's because I couldn't judge the effectiveness of the Shakespeare ART-3 antenna/radio without trying it out on a number of fixed-mounted VHF radio setups, which is exactly what I did. This compact battery-powered meter, which connects inline between the radio and the antenna, can test the voltage standing wave ratio of an antenna/cable/coupler, radio output power (in watts), and the VHF receiver function.

I started with my 19-year-old VHF, which did not seem to be receiving well. I carefully followed the instructions for each of the tests. Sure enough, when I ran the receiver test, the radio did not emit a "tone," which it should when reception is strong. But the performance of the antenna and output power tested well.

Next, I ran the trio of tests on two of my buddy's radios. One tested perfectly for all three parameters, including receiver tone. The second VHF, however, failed to achieve tone, again indicating poor reception.

Finally, I tested my son's relatively new VHF, and it passed all three tests with flying colors. Meanwhile, armed with the ART-3 test results, my friend and I are in the process of replacing our VHFs. Better to know and correct the issue than to remain blissfully unaware.

To connect the ART-3 between the radio and antenna coupler, you will need Shakespeare's No. 4079 preassembled 3-foot cable with PL-259 couplers on each end ($17.41; amazon.com). The ART-3 itself is $129.95; thegpsstore.com. —*JH*

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NEW
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Zodiac takes performance to the next level with its all-new 10-meter Center Console—an innovative blend of rigid hull and inflatable tube that delivers stability, comfort, and versatility in one bold design.

With a wide-open deck and dual lounge zones at the bow and stern, the layout offers easy flow and all-day livability. The stepped hull ensures a smooth, dry ride while maximizing fuel efficiency.

Ready for any climate and any adventure, this boat is built to go farther—comfortably, confidently, and with unmistakable Zodiac style.

Configure yours:

P-U

Q: Dear Doctor, we bought a used cruiser this past winter. Now, after several weekends spent aboard, we notice a decided sewage smell. The head and waste system appear to be performing properly and without leaks. What can it be?

Julio Mendes
Los Angeles

A: This symptom is usually a sign that the hoses need to be changed. These get porous and allow odors to escape over time.

Pump out the tank and flush the system well with bleach and water. Put on eye, face and hand protection before risking exposure to waste. Replace the hose with a high-quality marine sanitation hose, which basically means buying the more expensive sani hose that your supplier sells. This is no place to pinch pennies.

CLEAR CANVAS CARE

Q: Dear Boat Doctor, we are new boaters and find your column very helpful. Our boat's clear plastic enclosure cost a lot of money, and we want to care for it the right way. Can you offer tips for taking care of clear plastic boat enclosures?

Mary Camarda
Boston

A: Great question! Clear "canvas" can be made from several different materials. For specific recommendations, find out what your contractor used. The following is general advice that will serve you well regardless of the type.

Rinse with fresh water after every outing. Consider adding a filter to the hose if the water is laden with minerals. Then use a sponge to apply soapy water made with mild soap—not detergents like ammonia or abrasives such as Soft Scrub. Then gently rinse off and allow to air-dry.

For seasonal storage, it's best to lay the panels flat, with sheets of paper or scraps of fabric between each.

Good luck with your new boat!

BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

Q: Dear Boat Doctor, the canvas leaning-post cover of my center-console got splattered with quite a bit of tuna blood during a recent fishing trip. It was stored in a fish box, and one of my friends put a fish into that box instead of the other one that we were using for fish. Anyway, how do you clean blood from canvas?

Steve Hysell
Seabrook, New Hampshire

A: Blood is best cleaned when it's fresh. Use a half-cup of soap mixed with a half-cup of ammonia per gallon of water. Soak the canvas gently, then use a scrub brush to apply the mixture.

Glenn Raven Mills has a great chart on its website showing a multitude of stains with suggested cleaning solutions. Go to cdn.glenraven.net/sb2016/pdf/care-and-cleaning/stain-chart-guide-sunbrella-fabrics-en-us.pdf.

TOWROPE

Q: Dear Boat Doctor, can I make my own towrope for pulling my grandkids on a tube? The premade ones cost a lot, and polypropylene line is relatively cheap at the hardware store.

Jon Watling
St. Paul, Minnesota

A: Yes, you can build a towrope yourself. I would caution you that the generally considered minimum safe breaking strength for pulling a tube is 4,000 pounds. For a tube with more than four people on it, you might go up to 6,000-, 8,000- or even 12,000-pound breaking strength. You don't want the line breaking, causing you to lose control of crew on the tube. That means you should use a minimum of ⅝-inch-diameter polypropylene line. Because specs can vary by rope-maker, ask your supplier for the breaking strength.

DIE ELECTRIC

Q: Dear Boat Doctor, please settle a bet. My buddy says that dielectric grease shouldn't be used on battery connections. I swear by the stuff. Who's right? The internet provides mixed opinions.

Donald Hopewell
Memphis, Tennessee

A: Break out your wallet, Mr. Hopewell. Dielectric grease inhibits the flow of electricity. You may have used it and saw no ill effect, but the fact remains that less juice was flowing through your cables than would have without dielectric grease applied to your battery connections. This is likely why you can't find a consensus about it on the internet.

I believe in using very little grease and not between connections. Make clean, dry, tight connections, then apply just a tiny bit of grease on top of it after the connection is made.

MUST DEW

Q: Dear Doc, we have a center-console and store our life jackets, lines, and other gear in various in-deck boxes. This keeps things neat and out of the way, but by midway in the season, the gear smells musty, and mold and mildew begin to build up. We have tried various "Mild-Do Bags" and closet beads, but nothing works. The boat lives on a mooring all summer. Advice?

Jan Meade
Barrington, Rhode Island

A: First, make sure the box lids have good gaskets on them and that they can be latched tight. (If the boxes have no gaskets and no gutters, your job is harder.) This helps keep water out. Next, make it a point to open those boxes and expose them to air and light on a regular basis. For example, leave the lids open while you leave the boat, such as when going to the beach or out to lunch. Maybe you can leave the lids open, or propped ajar, while fishing or cruising, etc. When fair weather is forecast, head to the boat, open the lids to sun and air, then return before dark and close them, before the dew falls.

ASK THE DOCTOR

Send questions to Mick with your name and boating location to boatdr@boatingmag.com.

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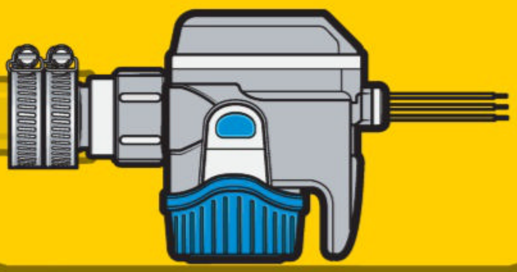
INSTALLING AN AUTOMATIC BILGE PUMP

Bilge pumps are essential safety items, and automatic models make retrofits easy.



SKILL LEVEL

1 OF 5

FINISH TIME

Approx. 2-3 hours

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

- Rule-Mate 1100 automatic bilge pump ($118.39; westmarine.com)
- Rule three-way lighted rocker-panel bilge-pump switch, Model 43 ($39.49; wholesalemarine.com)
- 1-inch ID flexible hose (if replacing the discharge line)
- Two stainless-steel hose clamps
- Power drill and bit set
- Jig saw or coping saw
- Phillips screwdriver
- Slotted screwdriver or hex driver (for hose clamps)
- Various crimp connectors with heat-shrink collars
- Wire strippers and crimping tool
- Heat gun
- Zip ties to support wires
- Marine silicone sealant
- Shop rags (to wipe away excess sealant)

A dewatering device is strongly recommended by the US Coast Guard aboard boats, and electric bilge pumps fulfill this role. However, bilge pumps can wear out. Replacing the old pump with one that has a built-in automatic switch simplifies the installation by eliminating the need to mount and connect a separate automatic switch.

A number of models feature built-in switches that sense high bilge water and automatically begin dewatering. Attwood Marine, Johnson Pumps, Rule Industries, T-H Marine, and others offer automatic bilge pumps of various sizes and outputs, as measured in gallons per hour.

Select a pump with the same output or greater than the original pump (see the chart on the opposite page). For more on bilge-pump output, visit boatingmag.com/choosing-right-bilge-pump. This project assumes that the boat already has a discharge hose leading to a through-hull fitting that is at least 8 inches above the heeled waterline.

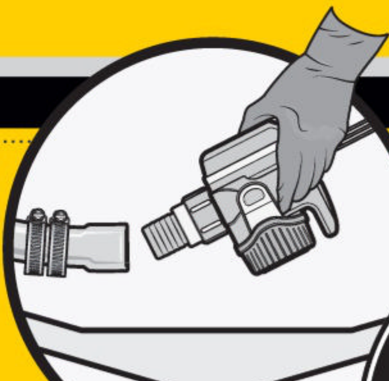
Your bilge-pump system should have a dedicated switch. If your boat doesn't have one, stand-alone switches are available from the same brands that offer automatic bilge pumps.

For this installation aboard a 17-foot flats skiff, we chose to retrofit with the Rule-Mate 1100 automatic bilge pump (1,122 gph). This 12-volt DC pump kicks into gear when bilge water reaches 2 inches and shuts down at ⅜ inch. It has a check valve to prevent backflow of water. We matched it with a Rule Model 43 three-way lighted rocker-panel bilge-pump switch. *—Jim Hendricks*

ILLUSTRATIONS: JIM HATCH. PHOTO: COURTESY RULE

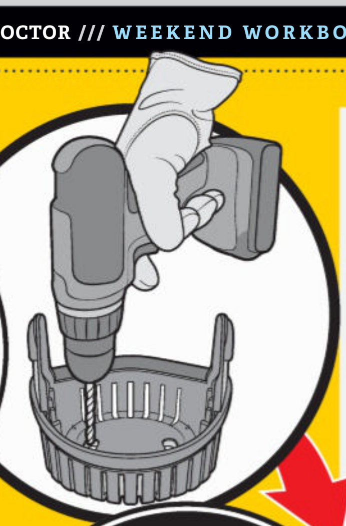
TESTING THE SYSTEM

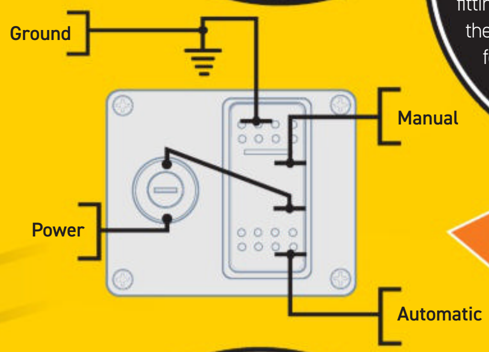
To test the Rule-Mate automatic-bilge-pump system, press down the momentary switch at the bottom of the rocker and listen for the whirring of the pump, indicating that the manual override function is working. Next press the latching switch at the top of the rocker. An indicator light confirms that power is getting to the pump. Then touch the Pumpcheck button on the pump itself on the opposite side of the outlet, hold your finger there for 5 seconds, and listen for the pump to begin running, indicating that the automatic function is also working.



TIP

When selecting a bilge pump, take into account "lift"—the vertical distance a pump must raise water to reach the discharge fitting. Lift reduces the rated output. With the Rule-Mate 1100, for example, a 3.3-foot lift cuts the output to 792 gph; a 6.7-foot lift cuts output to 456 gph.



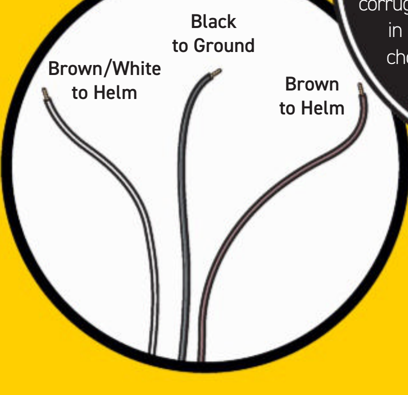


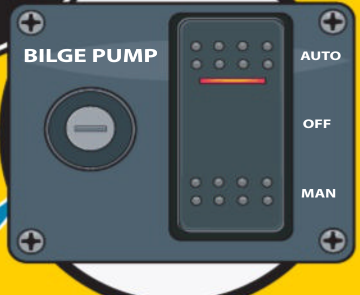
TIP

If you need to replace the discharge hose, know that smoothbore marine hose offers less resistance to water flow than does corrugated hose, thus improving efficiency in removing bilge water. If possible, choose flexible smoothbore marine hose or sanitation hose.

TIP

The Rule switch requires adding a glass fuse through a twist-and-lock port on the face of the panel. Refer to the chart in the instruction manual to determine the amperage for the fuse based on the length and gauge of the wire run between the switch and the pump.





BILGE-PUMP OUTPUT

Here are rules of thumb for deciding on the best bilge-pump output based on boatlength. If in doubt, err on the side of greater output.

Less than 18 feet: 1,000 gph
18 to 25 feet: 2,500 gph
25 to 32 feet: 4,000 gph
32 to 36 feet: 6,000 gph
36 to 45 feet: 8,500 gph

SELECT A LOCATION It often proves easiest to use the same location as the previous bilge pump, which is usually near the stern of the boat and as deep in the bilge as is practicable. Just as important is access for installation and cleaning the pump grate (and removing the check valve during the winterization process). There is often a hatch or deck plate above the pump for this purpose. Many boats have pads 'glassed onto the hull interior. This elevates the pump a bit so that it's not running continuously from residual bilge water, and gives you a place to fasten the pump without drilling into the hull proper.

INSTALL THE PUMP Detach the base grate from the pump by pressing on the two tabs. Then use the base as a template to mark two holes, ensuring that the pump will be oriented so that the discharge hose can be easily attached to the outlet. Drill the two holes with a $\frac{1}{8}$-inch bit in the mounting pad, taking care not to drill through too far. Dab each hole with marine sealant, and drive in No. 8 self-tapping stainless-steel screws of appropriate length to secure the pump but not penetrate the hull. Attach the outlet hose with two stainless-steel hose clamps to the pump fitting, and snap the pump into position.

INSTALL THE SWITCH Using a jig saw, carefully create a $2\frac{5}{16}$-inch-wide-by-$1\frac{11}{16}$-inch-tall cutout in an accessible location on the dash. Insert the $2\frac{7}{8}$-inch-wide-by-$2\frac{3}{8}$-inch-tall switch panel into the cutout and mark the four mounting holes, ensuring that the panel is aligned as you wish. Remove the panel and drill the four holes with a $\frac{1}{8}$-inch drill bit, then slightly chamfer them with a countersink bit to prevent chipping when driving in the fasteners. Place the panel in the cutout, dab each hole with marine sealant, and then carefully drive in the supplied No. 8 flat-head self-tapping screws. Do not overtighten.

RUN THE WIRES The Rule-Mate pump has three wires, and you will need to add extensions to at least two. Use crimp-on butt connectors with heat-shrink collars to create corrosion-resistant connections. Choose the gauge wire for the run based on the chart provided in the instruction manual. Run the brown and brown/white wires to the switch at the helm. Run the black wire to the ground circuit. You will also need to run a separate positive wire (hot line) directly from the positive terminal of the battery to the switch at the helm. Ensure that all wires are supported and don't sag into any bilge water.

MAKE THE CONNECTIONS Crimp on the supplied female spade connectors to the brown, brown/white and hot line, and connect them to the male spade connectors on the back of the switch as follows: brown to auto function, brown/white to manual override function, and hot line to the open spade connector at the back of the fuse port. Connect the spade connector for ground function on the switch to the ground circuit with a black wire. Crimp on ring connectors to the opposite end of the hot line and black wire, and connect to the positive terminal of the battery and ground circuit, respectively.

ILLUSTRATIONS: JIM HATCH

CLEANING NONSKID SURFACES

A common household cleaning product renders nonskid spotless and shiny.

The same properties that help provide grip for a boater's feet can allow dirt and grime to cling to nonskid surface with tenacity. There are myriad patterns of molded-in nonskid, as well as the "sand" or grit type of nonskid. The latter can prove trickier to get squeaky clean. Let's look at techniques for cleaning nonskid surfaces. —*Kevin Falvey*

If the deck or cockpit sole is soiled mostly by the grime from foot traffic and, perhaps, the randomly dropped pretzel, a boat brush with medium bristles combined with soapy water usually gets the job done on nonskid. For grit-type nonskid, you might want to use a stiff brush.

Some nonskid cleaning jobs prove tougher. Maybe your boat has been left to the ravages of seabirds. Or perhaps your berth is next to the Travelift slip and the boat is befouled by diesel exhaust residue. Or you're a fisherman with bloody decks. Or, possibly, the boat's simply been neglected. Whatever the cause, my go-to for tough nonskid cleaning is Soft Scrub With Bleach. This contains enough abrasive to get between the peaks of the nonskid and root out dirt. The bleach also helps dissolve dirt and stain particles while sanitizing as well. Wet the deck or sole, squirt the stuff directly on, and then scrub using a medium to stiff brush.

Bear in mind that Soft Scrub With Bleach produces a delayed reaction. You will clean the surface, and it will look good. Return the next day, and the surface will be absolutely gleaming. I count on this delayed effect to successfully tackle one of the toughest boat-cleaning jobs that I have come across: stains from oak leaves.

I have, on occasion, in the fall, parked my boat where oak leaves can fall into it. This happens between the time I haul and when I have finished winterization and covered it. Similarly, in spring, the boat sits uncovered for a short time while it's made ready for the water. If oak leaves blow in, especially when accompanied by rain, the resulting tannin stains resist most efforts at removal. Even Soft Scrub With Bleach seems to do little, except to maybe fade the stains, which take the form of the leaves themselves down to every detail of petiole, vein and midrib.

Until the next day. Then the stains, having had the scrub treatment, simply vanish after some time in the sun. This is a coupling, no doubt, of the bleaching power of sunlight and the chemical power of the bleach. In fact, it brings up one shortcoming of using Soft Scrub With Bleach: It leaves a residue that is the devil to rinse off completely. You think you've rinsed it clear—but it needs more rinsing.

Keep this residue in mind. For one thing, if you clean your nonskid gunwales today, tomorrow morning's dew might cause white powdery streaks down the topsides. Another thing to consider: Make sure that you don't splash the canvas or upholstery with this cleaner. It can break down plastic and will leave bleach spots on fabric. Another caveat: Don't use Soft Scrub With Bleach on smooth, shiny gelcoat parts of your boat. It will dull them.

Finally, the spatter from scrubbing with Soft Scrub With Bleach will spot your clothes, unless you are very careful. Personally, I don my foul-weather bibs and shod my feet in rubber (or go barefoot) for this job. I have destroyed fishing shirts and pairs of shorts in the past. But my nonskid? It gleams.

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PHOTOS: KEVIN FALVEY (2), COURTESY ULINE.COM (SOFT SCRUB)

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ELECTRIC BOAT-TRAILER WINCHES

You don't see a tremendous number of trailer boaters using electrically powered winches. But boaters who use power winches wouldn't have it any other way. There are a number of reasons why these systems might be the best choice for loading a boat on trailer, says Matthew Quinn, director of product and engineering for Powerwinch (powerwinch.com), which offers a wide choice of electric trailer winches and components for boaters. An electric power winch may well be a worthy consideration if you regularly face one or more of these five trailer-boating scenarios. —*Jim Hendricks*

POWER LOADING RESTRICTIONS In some regions such as Michigan, Minnesota and elsewhere, power loading—using the propulsion system to power a boat up on to a trailer—is prohibited. This is because power loading can dig holes at the base of the ramp, piling up sediment outside the ramp and creating a shoal that can damage props and lower units and impede or even prevent launching or loading. A power winch provides a kindly solution, letting you easily load the boat once it has settled onto the trailer. With heavier boats, consider a double-line pulley cable system that multiplies the pulling force of a power winch by using a pulley with a snatch block. Powerwinch offers all of the components to create such a system for its electric trailer winches.

AVERSION TO SALT A power winch minimizes the depth at which you need to situate the trailer versus power loading or cranking up the boat with a manual winch, especially if using a roller trailer or "slippery bunks." As a result, power-winching can help keep the tow vehicle's rear axle, frame, suspension system, wheels, exhaust and body out of the water. This means a lot in salt or brackish waters, which can corrode the metal parts and sensitive electrical connections of your tow vehicle. In this respect, the cost of a power winch helps extend the service life of your tow vehicle.

712
WARNING
READ OWNER'S MANUAL BEFORE USE. KEEP HANDS CLEAR OF CABLE SPOOL. STAND AWAY FROM UNIT WHEN IN USE. THIS UNIT IS NOT DESIGNED FOR OVERHEAD LIFTING OR LIFTING HUMANS.

SHALLOW RAMPS Shallow launch ramps—those that slope gently into the water—can prove problematic, forcing you to back your trailer and tow vehicle deeper than you might feel comfortable with. You risk flooding your vehicle interior, losing traction, and stalling your engine. Again, with a power winch, and especially with a roller trailer, there is less need to back in that far. You can walk the boat to the back of the trailer, hook up the cable or strap, and let electrical power do the rest while your tow vehicle remains high and dry.

FLUCTUATING WATER LEVELS Ever-changing water levels due to big tide swings or reservoir drawdowns and refills can create difficulties when trying to load a boat on a trailer. A power winch can help, especially on extreme low tides or lake drawdowns. This is when you don't want to put the trailer too far into the water, lest its wheels drop off the end of the concrete apron and the cross members become wedged on the drop-off. While you still need to exercise caution, you can place the trailer above the drop-off and use a power winch to pull the boat onto the bunks or rollers.

SCAN ME

Scan this tag for 10 things to look for in an electric trailer winch, or visit boatingmag.com/buyawinch.

HAND ME THE REMOTE Powerwinch and Fulton both offer models with wireless key-fob remote controls. (See our review at boatingmag.com/remotewinch.) Remotes let you stand well clear of the cable or web strap, which can inflict serious injury should they break under pressure. Plus, you can load the boat from just about anywhere—by the tow vehicle on the ramp pavement, the dock, or even aboard the boat itself.

PHOTOS: COURTESY POWERWINCH

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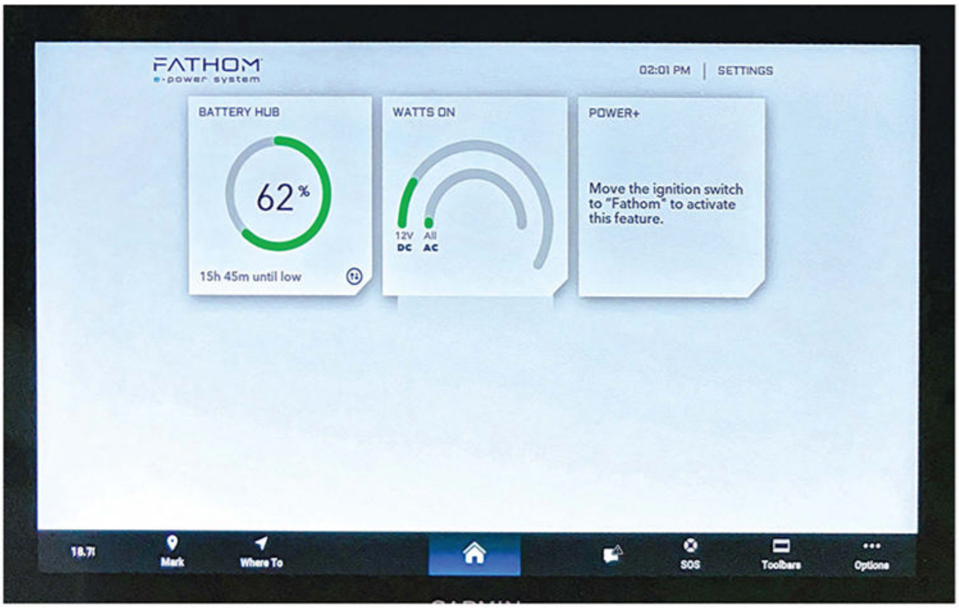
SCOUT 400 LXF LI-ION FATHOM E-POWER SYSTEM

Stored electric power seems poised to replace the combustion-generated electric power on midsize and larger pleasure boats. Scout Boats is leading the way with the introduction of its second model fitted with an e-power system in place of a generator.



Move the ignition switch to "Fathom" to activate this feature.

GAUGING SUCCESS Fathom provides data monitoring, including consumption rate and time remaining.

The 39-foot-7-inch Scout 400 LXF Li-Ion is a wide-beam luxury center-console equipped with the Fathom M7000-X+ Series, currently the premier e-power system offered by Navico Group, the technology division of Brunswick Corporation. Scout is one of the first boatbuilders outside the Brunswick portfolio to offer Fathom.

"We think that the 400 LXF is an ideal platform for this Fathom system," says Scout product specialist Capt. Josh Slayton. "This model is often used for entertaining and comes standard with power-hungry features including air conditioning, a gyrostabilizer, a powerful audio system, heated seats, a galley and a water heater. A silent e-power system in place of a genset offers the level of sophistication our customers expect from a Scout S-Class model, our highest level of luxury."

Regulator Boats is also offering an e-power system. Its E-Hub Lithium Battery System, assembled from components produced by Dometic Mobile Power Solutions, is standard equipment on the new Regulator 35 model, with three 300-amp-hour house batteries replacing a genset. The E-Hub system can be charged by shore power or by triple Yamaha F350 outboards.

Silent and odor-free operation is an obvious benefit of an e-power system over a diesel genset. E-power eliminates genset maintenance—always a headache—and offers the convenience of a single liquid fuel source. Plus, genset exhaust can create a carbon monoxide safety hazard.

Scout rigs the Navico Fathom M5000 series e-power system in place of a genset on its 377 LXF model. For charging, this system relies on shore power or the 12-volt alternators of Mercury or Yamaha outboards and provides basic monitoring and control. The Fathom 7000-X+ system offers next-level technology with real-time updates on battery-bank status and power consumption presented on the boat's MFD. The M7000-X+ series also integrates seamlessly with Mercury V-10 and V-12 Verado outboards equipped with 150-amp 12-/48-volt alternator systems, enabling precise control over the charge source and four times the charging speed of a 12-volt alternator.

The Fathom system is created using components supplied by Navico brands, including Mastervolt batteries and invertor/chargers and CZone digital switching in a complete system supplied to boatbuilders. The 400 LXF Li-Ion is equipped with four

PHOTOS: COURTESY SCOUT BOATS

Mastervolt MLI Ultra 24/6000 lithium-iron-phosphate (LiFePO4) batteries offering 6 kW/240 Ah of power. According to Slayton, this is enough power to run a 12,000 Btu air conditioner and a Seakeeper 4.5 continuously for five hours with the engines shut down. Navico claims battery life of 3,500 charge cycles, which Scout says equates to about 10 years of typical boat use. The entire system is covered by a five-year nondeclining warranty.

Slayton explains that the Fathom e-power system weighs about the same as the generator and other components it replaces, including a 15-gallon diesel fuel tank, and fits in the same space below an aft cockpit hatch. Engine options include triple or quad Merc Verado 400 hp V-10s or twin 600 hp Verado V-12 outboards. In all cases, two of the motors are equipped with the 12-/48-volt alternator system.

That alternator really makes this system perform. At engine speeds above 2,500 rpm, each alternator pumps out 100 net amps (6.5 kW) to the battery bank. Charge time might vary, but from indicated zero state of charge, the system will fully charge in just two hours of run time or 3.2 hours from 120-volt AC shore power.

There are also two selectable high-speed idle charge modes, which can be used when the boat is not underway. Extend Mode (2,000 rpm) generates 5 kW per engine (10 kW total). This mode adds approximately 10 percent SOC every 15 minutes. Boost Mode (2,500 rpm) generates about 13 kW total, adding 10 percent SOC every 10 minutes. In either mode, the engines are electronically prevented from shifting into gear. At engine speeds below 2,000 rpm, the alternators switch to 12 volts. With Extend and Boost modes, Scout owners can remain independent at the sandbar or at anchor for a much longer period of time.

Some boaters might be concerned about lithium batteries. We've all heard about e-bikes, e-scooters and battery-powered automobiles erupting in flames. Navico says that its Mastervolt batteries meet the ABYC E13 marine standard, are UL 1973 certified, and utilize the safest battery chemistry—that is LiFePO4—available. A built-in battery-management system monitors voltage, current, temperature, and state of charge to ensure that the battery is functioning safely, protecting the cells from overcharging or overdischarging. A safety disconnect will automatically stop charging and disconnect loads if a safety event is triggered. Anecdotally, tens of thousands of recreational fishing boats now run large LiFePO4 banks with no reported safety issues.

Sorry, but there's no free lunch. The Navico Fathom e-power system represents a $26,000 upcharge built into the $1,138,578 base price of the Scout 400 LXF Li-Ion model, compared with a similarly equipped Scout 400 LXF model with its standard Fischer Panda 8kW diesel generator. That upcharge is about 2 percent of the boat price, which we think is a reasonable toll to pay for those seeking the technology, convenience and luxury offered by e-power. *—Charles Plueddeman*

ALTERNATOR PROPULSION Mercury V-12 and V-10 outboards can be fitted with high-capacity, dual-voltage 12-/48-volt alternators to quickly recharge the Fathom system's batteries.

LITHIUM TIE-IN Specially constructed and managed lithium batteries power the Fathom system safely and efficiently.

PHOTOS: COURTESY SCOUT BOATS

FUEL WITHOUT FEAR

10 basic do's and don'ts when filling up at the fuel dock.

Fueling up is a basic component of boating. After all, if there's no flow, there's no go. But when was the last time you gave any thought to filling up at your local marina?

Recently I attended an American Boat & Yacht Council seminar on complying with H-24 fuel-system regulations. While the seminar focused mostly on the boatbuilding process, at the end, members of the panel—including experts from the US Coast Guard—held a brief discussion on safe fueling practices for recreational boaters. They shared more than one cautionary tale about how carefree fueling led to disaster, including fires and explosions.

So here are 10 tips for safely filling up your boat at the fuel dock. While these might seem a little "wash-behind-your-ears" basic, how many do you follow routinely?

1. TIE IT OFF I've seen many hurried boaters just loop around one midships cleat to tie off at the fuel dock. Best to tie off at the bow and the stern and put out fenders to minimize rock-and-roll, preventing jostling or spilling while handling the fuel pump.

2. SHUT IT DOWN Before you reach for the nozzle, shut off everything that's currently running on your boat. Obviously, the engine, but don't forget any electronics—including the radio—and anything drawing from a power source, such as your air-conditioning unit. This will help prevent a stray current or spark from igniting fuel vapors.

3. EVERYBODY OFF USCG and ABYC experts have both stressed the importance of having your entire crew exit the boat and remain on the dock during the fueling process. If something goes wrong, you're much better off being away from the confines of the deck or boat cabin.

4. PORT THE PORTABLES If you're in a small boat with a portable fuel tank, remove the tank from the boat and fill it on the dock both to prevent spills on board and to guard against any static-electricity buildup that could ignite fuel vapors.

5. BATTEN THE HATCHES Close up any open ports, deck hatches, cabin doors, and especially the engine compartment to prevent fuel vapors—which are heavier than air and sink—from entering into enclosed spaces.

6. STAY IN CONTACT Whether you're refueling the boat yourself or there's a dockhand, always make sure someone has a hand on the nozzle. This will help prevent overflow and spillage, and also ensures that someone has eyes on the boat at all times.

7. OPEN THE HATCHES When you're done fueling, open up the engine compartment and any doors or ports to ventilate the boat in case any fuel vapors found their way into enclosed spaces.

8. BLOW IT OUT For sterndrive and inboard boats, run the blower for five minutes before starting up to rid the engine compartment of any trapped gasoline fumes.

9. SPILL SAFETY If you do happen to spill gasoline on your boat while fueling, make sure to thoroughly clean it with absorbent pads. For major spills, move the boat away from the fuel dock without starting it and make sure to clean up the entire spill, even if it means canceling or postponing your trip. Call in experts if you need to.

10. SNIFF TEST Before firing up the engine, give all enclosed compartments a sniff to check for any fumes that could have penetrated inside. If you notice the strong smell of gasoline inside, don't turn the key or press the ignition button.

BONUS TIP If you mistake your freshwater fill or pump-out fitting for the fuel fill and start pumping it with unleaded gas, call it a day and get a professional to clean your system before boating again. You may have to replace the entire system, but a boat in dry dock is better than a boat in flames. *—Pete McDonald*

PHOTO: COURTESY WATER SPORTS FOUNDATION

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REEVALUATING FUEL CAPACITY

Old-school thinking about fuel capacity fades as marine technology advances.

Carrying as much fuel as possible ranked for many years as one of my most devoted beliefs, especially in the days of two-stroke outboards and heavy, overbuilt offshore hulls. But a recent fuel-tank retrofit project has led to an epiphany and a reevaluation of that belief.

A

Allow me to explain.

The old aluminum fuel tank in my 22-foot center-console fiberglass boat had begun to leak, and so last year, my youngest son and I drained and tore out the old 88-gallon tank.

True to form, I wanted to go big, but I discovered that the new design, once built, actually held less to the tune of 10 gallons, or 11 percent. A tad disappointed but otherwise pleased with the outcome, we put the 22-footer back to work, and an odd thing happened. My disappointment faded.

Old-school thinking no longer seemed relevant. Unlike the "old days," we now return from fishing 40 miles offshore with plenty of fuel, usually with more than half a tank. What's more, we have not yet violated the rule of thirds—one-third to get out, one-third to get back, and one-third in reserve.

That's because of physics, in this case. But today's marine technologies are also increasing efficiency, and thus decreasing the need for the massive fuel capacities needed in the past. Here are five reasons why today you might not need as much fuel capacity as you did in the past.

STINGIER OUTBOARDS Today's fuel-injected four-stroke outboards are a lot more fuel efficient than the carbureted two-strokes that dominated the market when I bought my boat in 1986. The old two-stroke outboards were particularly thirsty at offshore trolling speeds of 7 to 10 knots, forcing me on more than one occasion to carry as many as four 5-gallon fuel cans on deck in order to extend our offshore range and time on the water. By comparison, today's four-stroke models sip fuel, minimizing the need to carry inordinate amounts of gas.

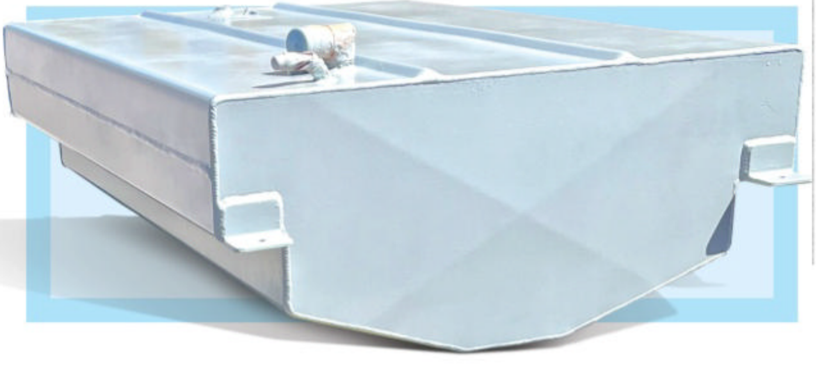
LIGHTER CONSTRUCTION Many of today's fiberglass boats weigh less than comparable models of yore thanks to advanced boatbuilding technology, which includes lightweight coring materials (versus wood), lighter and stronger fiber materials such as Kevlar and carbon fiber, and new vacuum-resin-infusion processes that eliminate excess resin. New boats are just as strong and durable as ever, maybe more so. And because they're lighter—all other factors being equal—you don't need as much fuel to go the same distance as in the past.

EFFICIENT RUNNING SURFACES Computer-aided design and virtual testing has resulted in slipperier hull surfaces. This includes the increasing use of step-hulls by boatbuilders, as well as ever-improving design methods, including computer-aided design and virtual testing of running surfaces before actual production begins. As a result, boats skim the water with greater efficiency than ever before, and so—again, with all other factors being equal—they burn comparatively less fuel than models of yesteryear.

DYNAMIC TRIM CONTROL Recent advances in automatic attitude-control technology are also increasing efficiency. A notable example is the Seakeeper Ride, which I recently installed on my boat. Instead of using a heavy hand in deploying trim tabs—which increases drag and reduces efficiency—the Ride system responds with blinding speed to bring down the bow to slice through a wave but then immediately lets the bow rise between waves to cruise more efficiently, I have found in my testing.

LESS FUEL, LESS WEIGHT Carrying less fuel is a bit of self-fulfilling prophecy when it comes to fuel efficiency. As I mentioned earlier, that's just a law of physics. My boat lost 60 pounds with 10 gallons less gas when the tank is full, and as I pointed out, the lighter your boat becomes, the less fuel—and money—you will burn through.

—Jim Hendricks



PHOTOS: JIM HENDRICKS

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THE FIRST THING

In an emergency, many things need to be done, often at once.

The types of emergencies that can occur aboard boats are as numerous as the types of boats and types of boaters. Naturally, our boats should be properly equipped with life jackets for everyone, distress signals, a VHF radio, and more.

We should also gain knowledge of the waters we are cruising and check the weather before heading out. That's all good, but general, advice. What should you do first in a specific situation? Here are five emergencies, and ways they might be handled, for your consideration.

BOOTHBAY HARBOR
47286

SUDDEN STORM CONDITIONS Don life jackets, then secure loose gear, close hatches/windows, and reduce speed while maintaining headway and steerage. Choose a safe shelter, and head there immediately. Turn on your nav lights. Have your crew sit close to the centerline, and on the sole, for safety and stability. With lightning strikes, have everyone stay low and away from metal. Remove metal jewelry, and lower the rods and outriggers.

FIRE Turn the boat so that the wind doesn't fan the flames and blows the smoke away, preventing its spread and smoke inhalation. Don life jackets. Shut off the fuel if the tanks or engines are at risk. Call mayday on VHF Channel 16, a DSC-VHF distress button, or 911 on a cellphone with service. Give your boat description, location, and passengers on board. Use a fire extinguisher to PASS: Pull pin; Aim at fire base; Squeeze handle; Sweep side-to-side. Never use water on gas, oil, grease or electrical fires. If you can safely throw the burning object, toss it overboard. If flames threaten a portable gas tank or propane cylinder, toss it over or abandon ship.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY Is it life-threatening or manageable? If serious, call mayday on VHF 16, use a DSC-VHF distress button, or 911 on a cellphone with service. Stop bleeding with pressure or by raising the limb above heart level. Use a sterile dressing secured with bandages. If the victim is in shock, keep them warm and lying down with their feet raised.

COLLISION After a collision, immediately stop your engines and check for injuries aboard your boat. Have everyone don a life jacket. Treat the injuries. Check for flooding, then activate bilge pumps, close seacocks, and stuff gear into holes to control leaks. Call for help. When safe, check on the other boat and its passengers. If possible, document the scene with pictures and video.

SINKING First, don life jackets. Make a distress call (VHF 16, DSC-VHF distress button, or 911 on a cell). Find the leak and activate bilge pumps. Make temporary repairs, such as closing seacocks or jamming wet clothing into an opening. Head for the nearest shore to beach your boat. To abandon ship, gather what you need: a line to hold everyone together, hats and jackets, water, and a handheld VHF. Take distress signals. Stay near the sinking boat so that you can be spotted more easily by rescuers. Climb atop a swamped or capsized boat to forestall hypothermia.

CAUGHT ON A DAM OR WATERFALL Dams or spillways with dangerous currents can suck in boats, even against their engines. Stay with the boat, and get life jackets on everyone. Drop an anchor before you reach the dam to hold you in safe water for rescue. Make a distress call (VHF 16, DSC-VHF distress button, or 911 on a cell). Keep everyone low to prevent tipping and swamping, and move them back from the edge to balance the boat. If you do go into the water and are swept over, tuck your chin, draw your knees up, and wrap your arms around them tightly with wrists locked.

—Capt. Chris Caswell

PHOTOS: COURTESY US COAST GUARD

MAKE DSC FULLY FUNCTIONAL ON A VHF RADIO

Activating Digital Selective Calling (DSC) on your VHF allows making a mayday call with the push of a button. DSC broadcasts your boat description and GPS coordinates freeing you for other tasks in an emergency. Scan this tag to learn about DSC, or go to boatingmag.com/dscfunctions/.

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LIPPERT

By Randy Vance

BOAT SOAP

BoatingLab digs in on sustainable boat cleaning that won't hurt your boat.

Internet analytics reveal that "environmentally safe boat soap" is a wildly common search term entered into Google. The keystrokes reveal a plethora of bits and advice from forums, magazines and websites pointing toward food ingredients for cleaning. After all, if you can eat it, it can't be bad for the environment, right?

Not so fast.

Just as many medicines are poison when improperly dosed, many food products can also be destructive pollutants in the environment. And nearly all food ingredients selected by "home-grown" boaters are chosen for caustic or abrasive properties destructive to the protective attributes of a boat's gelcoat.

We spoke to Charles Martin, regional manager for Polynt Composites USA, one of the largest providers of gelcoat compounds in the US boating market. He reveals that the three enemies of your boat's gelcoat are high acidic or alkaline cleaners used too frequently, improper use of abrasives, and a failure to protect gelcoat from the sun's UV light.

"Gelcoats are applied to a polished mold, and the boat is built inside that coated mold," Martin says. "As it cures, a thin resin layer develops on the gelcoat next to the mold, and that seals and protects the compound beneath it. Once you've damaged that surface, you might need progressively harsher cleaning methods as the unprotected gelcoat continues to break down."

His recommendation for maintaining your boat's shine is frequent washing with a neutral PH soap followed by a coat of wax. The sooner you begin, the better and easier it is to protect your investment. Avoid pine tars and alcohol, both of which act as solvents when applied to cured resins.

We also contacted a major manufacturer of car-care and boat-care products to ask the question: What is the difference between car-wash and boat-wash soap? The off-the-record reply was "very little." Both car topcoats and gelcoat require a soap with a neutral pH (indicating neither too acidic nor too alkaline), with surfactants to lift dirt without use of solvents that damage the finish over time.

Finally, we looked into environmental issues pertaining to soaps. In the 1970s, at the encouragement of the Environmental Protection Agency, soap manufacturers began to eliminate phosphates—a persistent pollutant—and replaced them with other unpronounceable but more-readily-biodegradable chemicals. Today's EPA recommendations expand to include packaging highly concentrated soaps in smaller bottles to be diluted for cleaning by the user. This shrinks the environmental footprint of manufacturing, bottling, storing and transportation considerably.

The survey says: Boaters are reluctant to go "off-label" for cleaning supplies, but savvy boaters know when they can and when they can't. After years of noticing that many professional cleaners used off-label products, we decided it was time to see if they were safe for your boat.

HOW WE TESTED

We traveled to Advance Auto Parts, Walmart, and West Marine to find auto, boat, and household cleaners to test for pH and review for caustic ingredients. We eliminated soaps that had pine tar and other solvents. We avoided products that advertised a wax product as an ingredient. Our job was to find soaps that prep for wax or ceramic, not ones that add a coating we'd have to remove.

A pH-neutral soap desirable for cleaning gelcoat will register between 6 and 8 pH, with 7 being absolute neutral. We tested pH with litmus-test strips acquired at a pool-supply store and an electronic meter from Harbor Freight Tools, then averaged the results. First, we tested the soap in concentrate form, then diluted it according to directions and tested it again. The pH of a soap is one important consideration. A high-alkaline soap with a pH of over 8 or a highly acidic soap of under 5 can be absorbed and diluted instantly in the mass of a waterway, but over the long haul, it is harmful to the finish of a boat and its upholstery.

Star brite
BLUEBERRY
BOAT WASH
Biodegradable Formula
Concentrated Formula
Cleans All Marine Surfaces
Won't Remove Wax or Polish
CAUTION
Net 16 U.S. fl. oz./473 ml

STAR BRITE

BLUEBERRY BOAT WASH

VOLUME: 16 oz.

PRICE: $5.96

DILUTION: 1 oz. per gal.

FOAMING ACTION: Good

pH UNDILUTED: 7.5

pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 6.8

ANALYSIS: We've used Star brite products for years, noting the company's commitment to minimizing its environmental impact by making soaps safe for use around water. Don't waste their concentrate by overdosing. The soap forms a dense foam, and with a brush or mop, removes all but the most penetrating stains. The EPA frowns on perfumes and dyes in soap as additional chemicals unnecessary to the mission of cleaning, but our Blueberry soap had a sure-enough fruit smell and blue color. Ethanol is used in its manufacturing to clarify and add viscosity to the soap, not as a solvent in final cleaning.

PHOTOS: MAKSYM / ADOBE STOCK (SUDS BACKGROUND), RANDY VANCE

West Marine
HEAVY-DUTY
Boat Soap
• Safe for all marine surfaces
• Won't remove wax or polish
• Removes dirt, grease, fish blood and more
Net 32 U.S. fl. oz./1 U.S. qt./946 ml

WEST MARINE

HEAVY-DUTY BOAT SOAP

VOLUME: 32 oz.
PRICE: $10.39
DILUTION: 1 oz. per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Good
pH UNDILUTED: 6.5
pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 6.8

ANALYSIS: Psychedelic pink in color, it had a perfume-free soapy smell, giving one extra point on the EPA's tally sheet, but it's neutralized by the color dye. That doesn't cause us to fear its safe efficacy for boat washing as long as the dosage is per instructions. Not coincidentally, its dosage was the same as the Star brite, and its diluted pH was exactly the same, as was its listed chemical makeup. We wondered if the lack of perfume caused its lower concentrated pH. Star brite bottles under a number of brand names. West Marine, Bass Pro Shops and Walmart are noteworthy among these.

SUPER VALUE
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HIGH FOAMING
CAR WASH
CONCENTRATE
ATTACKS SPOTS & STREAKS FOR A HIGH GLOSS FINISH

RAINX

HIGH-FOAMING CAR WASH

VOLUME: 64 oz.
PRICE: $7.97
DILUTION: 1 oz. per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Good
pH UNDILUTED: 8
pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 6.7

ANALYSIS: According to RainX's material safety data sheet, ingredients are withheld as trade secrets, so we received no help in analysis from that. It's green in color, lacks perfume, and foams copiously for such a small 1-ounce dose to a gallon of water. Its pH of 6.7 lands it squarely in the middle of acceptability for acrylic paint and resin gelcoat. Because RainX is known for creating fluids for dissolving residue on windshields and some are destructive to acrylic, we would avoid using it on acrylic windshields. At the least, try testing it on a corner multiple times before proceeding.

#1 SELLING WASH
TurtleWax
MAX POWER
CAR WASH
MODERATE
AGGRESSIVE
XTREME

TURTLE WAX

MAX POWER CAR WASH

VOLUME: 64 oz.
PRICE: $6.97
DILUTION: 3 oz. per gal.; 9 oz. per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Good
pH UNDILUTED: 9.4
pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 7

ANALYSIS: This product offered three dilution levels. We tested only the lowest and highest. Both tipped the pH meter to 7 even though the label says "3 levels of cleaning boost the pH cleaning power for any task." Neutral is the golden ticket for boat washing, and this one pulled the ticket at the lowest concentrate. Directions say that the pH should have reached 8.5 and 10 for the higher concentrates. In our opinion, higher concentrates should be unnecessary. It's also formulated for use in a foam sprayer, a handy device that forgoes the use of a bucket.

DAWN
PLATINUM
REMOVE 99% GREASE & FOOD RESIDUE
FRESH RAIN
TIME TO REFILL
EZ-SQUEEZE
NO FLIP NO MESS

DAWN

PLATINUM DISH WASHING SOAP

VOLUME: 24.3 oz.
PRICE: $4.94
DILUTION: 1 oz. per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Good
pH UNDILUTED: 8
pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 8

ANALYSIS: Oil-soaked ducklings might benefit from Dawn dish soap, but unlike gelcoat, feathers grow back. At a pH of 8, it's probably best-suited to stainless-steel flatware, ceramic dishes and glasses. We think it should be used only in a pinch on your boat, and it should be immediately rinsed away. It might help remove organics, but it won't help dissolve calcium water spots. In our experience, dish soap has proved too harsh on automobile paint, and we wouldn't expect gelcoat to be any more forgiving of its caustic nature. Leave it to the ducklings.

PHOTOS: MAKSYM / ADOBE STOCK (SUDS BACKGROUND); RANDY VANCE (4)

MR. CLEAN

MULTI-SURFACE CLEANER

VOLUME: 23 oz.
PRICE: $3.94
DILUTION: ¼ cup per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Fair
pH UNDILUTED: 9.5
pH PROPERLY DILUTED:7.9

ANALYSIS: Meadows-and-rain perfume and green dye add extra ingredients that the label says might be allergens. The pH is on the high side of neutral at its recommended dilution, so we'd steer clear of it for boats except in a pinch or in washing the nonskid deck after a day of grinding in dirt, fish blood, and guts. It's phosphate-free and biodegradable, per the label, and we don't think the bald guy with the busy white eyebrows would lie, but it belongs in the kitchen.

FABULOSO

MULTI-PURPOSE CLEANER

VOLUME: 56 oz.
PRICE: $4.47
DILUTION: 1 oz. per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Fair
pH UNDILUTED: 6.5
pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 6.7

ANALYSIS: A friend recommended Fabuloso. Apparently her boyfriend uses it regularly on his boat and approves of the results. So we grabbed a bottle for this test and learned, sure enough, that its diluted pH of 6.7 is about as close to neutral pH as can be. It has dyes, fragrances and allergens, per the label, but no other harmful ingredients in the biodegradable formula. It additionally bears the EPA's Responsibly Made stamp. On the downside, it foamed only a little better than Mean Green.

SIMPLE GREEN

ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER

VOLUME: 67.6 oz.
PRICE: $ 6.47
DILUTION: 2 oz. per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Good
pH UNDILUTED: 9
pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 7

ANALYSIS: Simple Green has been a staple of boat detailers for years. It surprised us when we first learned this, but it opened our eyes to other options for boat soap. Mostly, detailers use the product in spray bottles diluted in water to add a final spit-polish cleaning surface for boat shows and photo shoots. It will make 33 gallons of light cleaning soap in a bucket and bears the EPA's Safer Choice medallion as an environmentally appropriate product. If you know, you know and love it.

MEAN GREEN

CLEANER & DEGREASER

VOLUME: 1 gal./128 oz.
PRICE: $6.18
DILUTION: 4 oz. per gal.
FOAMING ACTION: Fair
pH UNDILUTED: 11
pH PROPERLY DILUTED: 9.6

ANALYSIS: Its pH is too high to be a viable boat soap when mixed per its directions. We then mixed just 1 ounce in 1 gallon of water, and the pH came down to 7.5. However, the thin bubbles and high-foaming surfactant qualities needed to remove grime and grease from a boat weren't there at this level of dilution. Mean Green was once a primary sponsor of NASCAR and Sprint Cars but dropped out. We don't know if the soap was used to clean their cars, but the Mean Green NASCAR rides no more.

PHOTOS: MAKSYM / ADOBE STOCK (SUDS BACKGROUND), RANDY VANCE (4)

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BOATING CERTIFIED TEST

#3454

CRUISERS YACHTS 57 FLY

Aboard the incomparable 57 Fly, the world is yours to visit, enjoy, and soak it all in. On offshore adventures, it's a comfortable and solid performer.

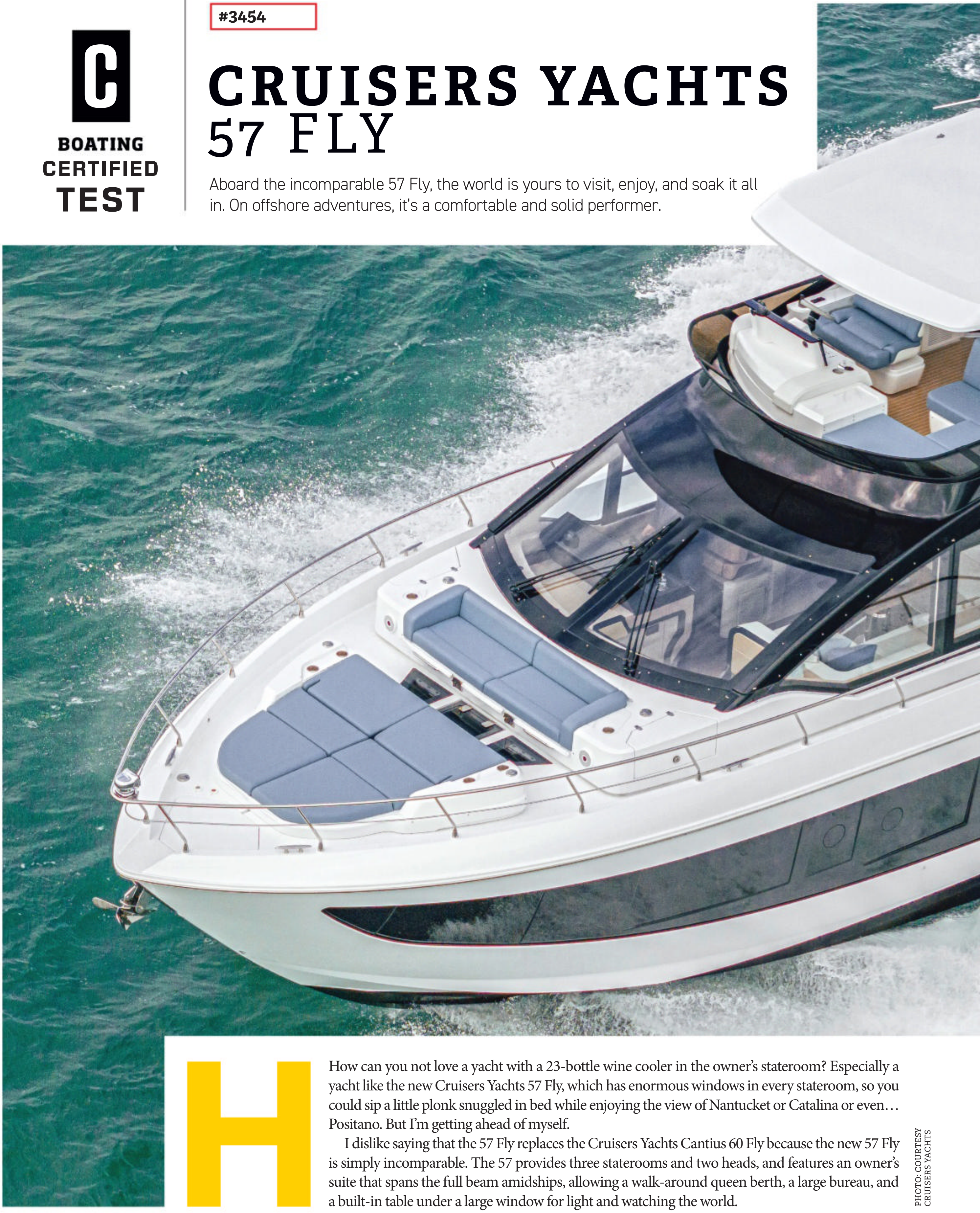


PHOTO: COURTESY CRUISERS YACHTS

How can you not love a yacht with a 23-bottle wine cooler in the owner's stateroom? Especially a yacht like the new Cruisers Yachts 57 Fly, which has enormous windows in every stateroom, so you could sip a little plonk snuggled in bed while enjoying the view of Nantucket or Catalina or even… Positano. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I dislike saying that the 57 Fly replaces the Cruisers Yachts Cantius 60 Fly because the new 57 Fly is simply incomparable. The 57 provides three staterooms and two heads, and features an owner's suite that spans the full beam amidships, allowing a walk-around queen berth, a large bureau, and a built-in table under a large window for light and watching the world.

SCAN ME

To see our online photo gallery of the Cruisers Yachts 57 Fly, scan this tag or go to boatingmag.com/3454.

PHOTO: COURTESY CRUISERS YACHTS

Cruisers Yachts has coined the phrase "water interaction," and that's exactly what the 57 Fly achieves, from the extra-wide swim platform that lowers to become a beach (or launch an 800-pound tender or PWC) to the foldout veranda that turns a big piece of the port bulwark into added deck space. But wait, there's more. A pair of stools mount on the veranda next to a sliding window that opens directly into the galley, making this an entertainment area where you can pass munchies around. And the cockpit has a wraparound settee on the transom with high/low table to enjoy beverages, dining, playing cards and much more.

Continuing the water interaction, superyacht designer Luiz Debasto created oversize windows in every part of the yacht, finishing with a pleasant ocean-sand oak finish on the boat provided for our test.

But don't miss the Fly part of the 57 Fly, because it's huge. If Scotty beamed me down, blindfolded, to the flybridge, I couldn't guess the boat size within 10 feet. For starters, it has its own alfresco galley, with a 2-square-foot Texan barbecue with both a conventional grill and a flat plancha

PHOTO: COURTESY CRUISERS YACHTS

(think seasoned veggies or tasty seafood).

Yes, there's a gourmet-equipped galley in the salon, with everything from convection oven to dishwasher to Kenyon cooktop, all opening to the cockpit through triple accordion doors. But with this much cooking ability, what about the actual eating?

The 57 Fly has four—count 'em, four—dining areas, starting with the big dinette in the cockpit. Then there's another in the salon, as you'd expect, and another on the flybridge for everything coming off that grill. What you won't expect is that the entire foredeck is Transformer-like: It morphs from sun pad to adjustable-backed chaises facing either way to comfy settees, and then into another full dining area with twin tables—perfect when anchored at dusk.

Boat buyers should note that the Galeon 560 Fly, powered by straight inboard 725 hp Volvo Penta D11s (price not available due to tariff concerns), also offers two en suite staterooms plus a smaller guest cabin (with crew cabin aft). The Galeon boasts foldout terraces on both sides as opposed to the Cruisers Yachts single.

Water interaction was this boat's design mantra, and Cruisers Yachts executed on that, as testing shows.

Inside the 57 Fly's all-weather salon, guests have another couch and a 55-inch pop-up TV, although the huge windows (remember water interaction?) provide an unblocked vista. And the galley has four undercounter fridges (totaling 12.6 cubic feet), so the skipper's view aft isn't blocked by the usual house-size fridge.

That skipper is cossetted on a double-wide bolstered helm seat with twin footrests and an opening window for talking to the gas dock guys. With the oversize windshield, Cruisers created a curved dashboard that curls over the twin 16-inch Garmin monitors, creating an "eyebrow" to defeat glare.

On the lower deck, there's a VIP stateroom forward with queen berth (and big windows), plus a guest cabin with twin berths that slide into a double. The VIP head is en suite, shared with the guest cabin and as a day head.

Something I love that I haven't mentioned is the air-conditioned crew quarters aft of the engine room. While the Cruisers Yachts 57 Fly is an owner-operator yacht, there are times when an extra pair of hands for anchoring or docking (and cleaning up) are welcome. But I think this space, which can also be a work area, is perfect for a teenager's need for privacy (and music!).

Power for the 57 Fly comes from a pair of Volvo Penta IPS 950 pod drives, mated to a Volvo D11 truck engine with its solid reputation for being bulletproof. This 6-cylinder common-rail diesel has a twin-entry turbo and punches out 725 hp through counter-rotating props, which was more than enough to push us past the 30-knot mark, even with the Gulf Stream acting up. A 17 kW Onan genset is standard in a sound box, upgradable to 21 kW, and a Seakeeper 9 gyrostabilizer is standard.

Underway, the 57 Fly proved itself a solid and reassuring performer. Donald Blount and Associates designed the hull, which, along with the Seakeeper gyrostabilizer, kept us comfortable up-sea, down-sea, and across the swells. We topped out past the 30-knot mark in the lumpy Gulf Stream and, backed off to 25 knots, the 57 Fly sipped fuel at 63 gph, which gave us a 250-nautical-mile range. Need more? Pull back the hammers to 9 knots, and you're looking at 700 nautical miles, which should get you from Newport to Bermuda with some slosh still left in the 611-gallon tank.

After our offshore adventure, returning to the dock was easy-peasy. With the IPS joystick, a skipper can plant it precisely and slide the boat sideways into the tightest spaces. Even Aunt Edna could dock the 57 Fly. Wait, let me think about that.

If "water interaction" is new to you, check out the Cruisers Yachts 57 Fly for a thorough definition. *—Capt. Chris Caswell*

High Points

- ▶ The skipper has a 360-degree view, thanks to a low-profile fridge in the galley.
- ▶ A lounge/chaise folds out of the transom to make the swim platform into a beach club for watching kids or, yes, water interaction.
- ▶ The seamanlike foredeck has a Quick vertical windlass and 200 feet of chain tucked (with a washdown) into the chain locker, and two nearby clamshell lockers stash everything from dock lines to fenders.

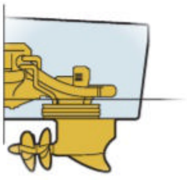
Low Points

- ▶ The lower galley has a thoughtful Lucite backsplash to keep dribbles off the upholstery, but there are no drip ridges around the galley counter for spills.
- ▶ The salon's overhead treatment is very *Star Trek*-esque, with swoops and hidden lighting—methinks a bit too much.

· **LOA:** 57'0" · **BEAM:** 16'6" · **DRAFT (MAX):** 4'4" · **DISPLACEMENT (APPROX.):** 58,000 lb. · **TRANSOM DEADRISE:** 15.5 degrees · **BRIDGE CLEARANCE:** 22'9" · **MAX CABIN HEADROOM:** 8'0" · **FUEL CAPACITY:** 611 gal. · **MAX HORSEPOWER:** 1,450 · **AVAILABLE POWER:** Twin Volvo Penta IPS diesel pod drives

Price: $2,790,000
(with test power)

AVAILABLE POWER:
IPS DRIVE



HOW WE TESTED

ENGINES: Twin 725 hp Volvo Penta IPS 950 **DRIVE/PROP:** IPS/P4 Bronze Duoprop propsets **GEAR RATIO:** 1.7:1 **FUEL LOAD:** 250 gal. **WATER ON BOARD:** 65 gal. **CREW WEIGHT:** 650 lb.

CRUISERS YACHTS
Oconto, Wisconsin; cruisersyachts.com

C

BOATING
CERTIFIED
TEST
RESULTS

SPEED			EFFICIENCY					OPERATION	
rpm	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	angle	sound level
1000	8.8	10.2	7.9	1.1	1.3	613.9	706.5	0	60
1500	11.3	13.0	24.0	0.5	0.5	257.8	296.7	3	64
2000	19.6	22.6	49.0	0.4	0.5	219.9	253.1	5	69
2500	29.0	33.4	72.0	0.4	0.5	221.3	254.7	5	75
2560	30.2	34.8	77.0	0.4	0.5	215.7	248.2	5	78

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

ADVENTURE AWAITS

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LIPPERT

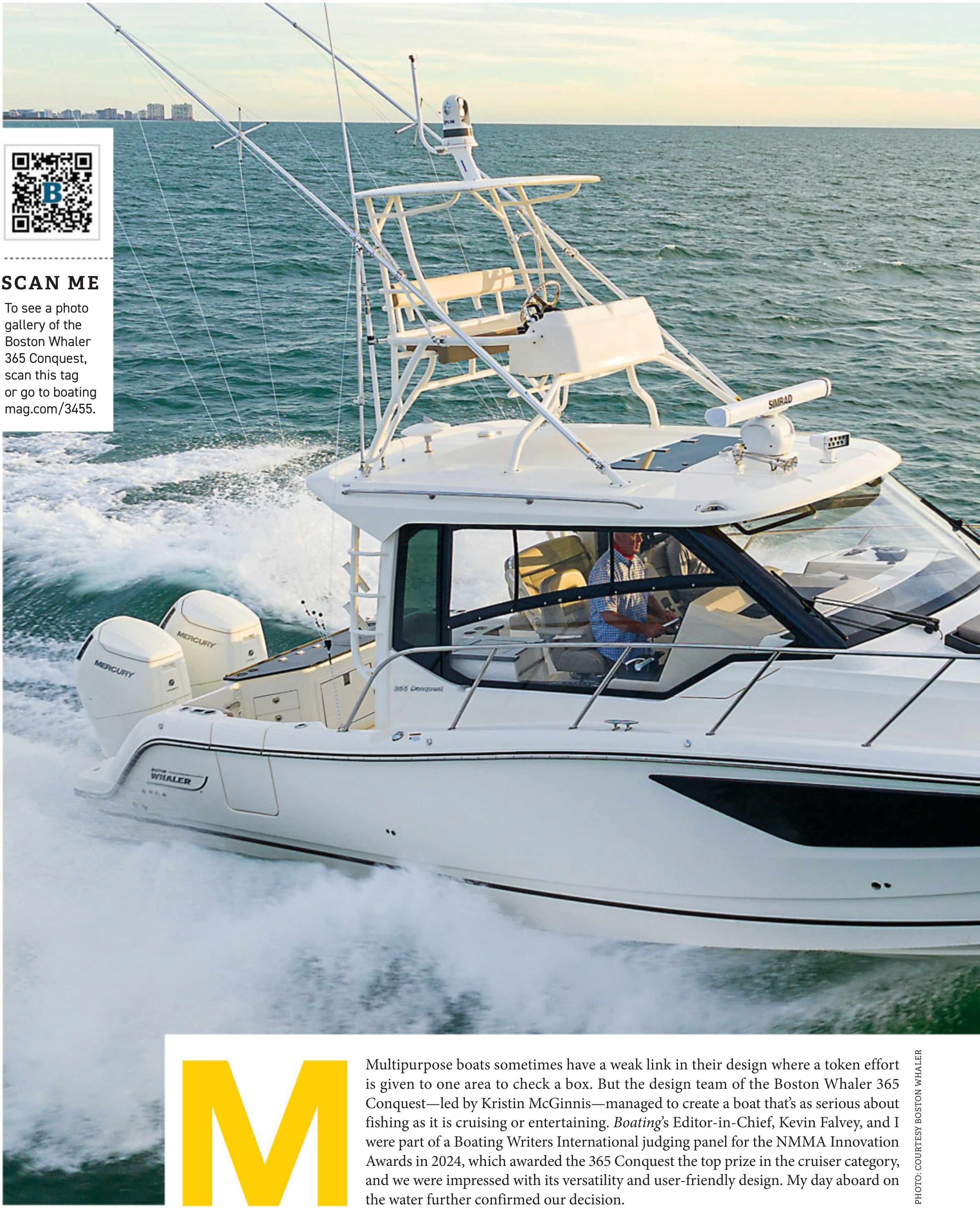


PHOTO: COURTESY BOSTON WHALER

SCAN ME

To see a photo gallery of the Boston Whaler 365 Conquest, scan this tag or go to boatingmag.com/3455.

Multipurpose boats sometimes have a weak link in their design where a token effort is given to one area to check a box. But the design team of the Boston Whaler 365 Conquest—led by Kristin McGinnis—managed to create a boat that's as serious about fishing as it is cruising or entertaining. *Boating*'s Editor-in-Chief, Kevin Falvey, and I were part of a Boating Writers International judging panel for the NMMA Innovation Awards in 2024, which awarded the 365 Conquest the top prize in the cruiser category, and we were impressed with its versatility and user-friendly design. My day aboard on the water further confirmed our decision.

#3455

BOATING CERTIFIED TEST

BOSTON WHALER
365 CONQUEST

Boston Whaler's award-winning design of the 365 Conquest maximizes its cross-utility as a do-it-all boat that emphasizes comfort.

PHOTOS: COURTESY BOSTON WHALER

One of the benefits of the 365 Conquest's 12-foot beam is its 53 square feet of uncluttered cockpit space. In fishing mode, this gives multiple anglers room to fish without bumping elbows, and the 28-inch minimum freeboard helps keep them on the dry side of the gunwale. For landing the big one or easing into the water for a swim or dive, there's a starboard-side entry door that also holds the boarding ladder for convenience.

There's plenty of comfortable seating for those watching the trolling spread, with a fold-down jumpseat to port ($3,884) and a nearby elevated double-wide seat. To shift into entertainment mode, just install the twin teak tables ($10,645) found under the electronically actuated in-floor boat systems compartment and start grilling some skewered shrimp on the electric barbie located on the optional transom summer kitchen ($8,333), which also includes a pullout freezer, three storage drawers, and a sink and spigot. With convenient 120-volt outlets, plug in a blender and start spinning up the frozen margaritas. Hardcore anglers will likely opt for a fold-down transom bench seat instead of the kitchen. An optional

electronic SureShade ($15,598) deploys from the hardtop to keep those aft protected from the noonday sun.

Heading below into what Boston Whaler calls its Dynamic Cabin, the roominess is impressive for a 36-foot-6-inch boat, thanks, in part, due to its 6-foot-9-inch headroom. At the bow is a dining group with a trapezoidal teak table and booth seating for six. Boston Whaler designers created a James Bond moment with the dinette, which transforms into a berth with the press of two buttons. The first one lowers the table electronically, and then the next one causes two bench seat bottoms to close like a giant clamshell, forming an island berth. There's ample room to hop aboard from the sides, and there are angled bolsters for lounging comfort when reading or watching TV on the standard 32-inch flat-screen.

> Boston Whaler's clever space utilization is unrivaled and embodied here by the elevated throne overlooking the cockpit. It offers a slide-out footrest and a pullout seat bottom, and houses a drawer refrigerator.

A yacht-worthy dry head on the starboard side has a shower door to keep the spray from the rain showerhead and handheld wand confined. On the dry side is an electric-flush porcelain toilet, a vessel sink, and a large vanity with plenty of storage. Amidships on our test boat was a 72-inch-long couch for lounging or use as a single berth, or owners can replace it with a mini galley with a refrigerator, burner and microwave. Behind the teak steps into the cabin lies a double-wide amidships berth with 48 inches of headroom on the port side, easing the claustrophobia reflex these berths often trigger.

The raised helm deck features a panoramic view, and a standard Fischer Panda 12 kW diesel-generator-powered 16,000 Btu air-conditioning system keeps everyone cool on hot days. There's a standard Stamoid and rigid Makrolon polycarbonate weather enclosure with a door to the cockpit for those in more temperate climates and a full-glass enclosure option ($9,199) for those up north. To port is a seating group with twin booth seats that flank the three-position teak table that drops down to support filler cushions, transforming the area into a recliner lounge or even a berth. When it's time to run, the forwardmost seatback tilts back, which also slides the seat base aft to create a two-person co-pilot seat and, on our boat, there was even a 19-inch Simrad screen, so they can actively assist the skipper who has twin 19-inch Simrads at the helm as part of an upgrade from the standard 16-inch units that run $15,806 for all three MFD displays.

Our test boat featured twin Mercury Verado 600 outboards, representing a $29,839 upgrade over triple 400 Verados and offering extra boost out of the hole with a two-speed transmission that propelled the Conquest to plane in 5.5 seconds and to 30 mph in just 7.4 seconds. Its top speed peaked at 58.3 mph. Because only the lower units move on the V-12 engines, the integrated electronic power-steering system is very responsive and, at docking speeds, proves extremely agile thanks to its 45-degree range of motion in either direction instead of the usual 30 degrees of most outboards. A standard Joystick Piloting for Outboards system makes docking time a low-stress moment.

Those shopping for a premium multipurpose cruiser fishing boat with Yamaha power (Whaler is Mercury only) should also check out the Pursuit OS 355. It has a larger livewell and slightly more deadrise but sleeps only four compared with five to seven for the Boston Whaler. *—Alan Jones*

High Points

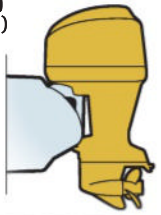
- ▶ Optional bow sun lounge with adjustable backrest is a tanning oasis and also features grab rails and drink holders.
- ▶ An available upper helm station ($64,179) gives two a bird's-eye view.
- ▶ We applaud the transom-mounted fixture that allows for quick engine flushing.

Low Points

- ▶ Small livewell for a fishing boat this size.
- ▶ Black dash insets are annoyingly reflective, and the white console tops create reflective ghosts on the windshield.
- ▶ Narrow 8-inch walkway on the transom.

· **LOA:** 36'6" · **BEAM:** 12'0" · **DRAFT:** 2'7" (outdrives up) · **DISPLACEMENT:** 23,447 lb. (with engines, fuel and water) · **TRANSOM DEADRISE:** 19 degrees · **BRIDGE CLEARANCE:** 9'10" (with hardtop) · **MAX CABIN HEADROOM:** 6'9" · **FUEL CAPACITY:** 410 gal. · **MAX HORSEPOWER:** 1,200 · **AVAILABLE POWER:** Twin or triple Mercury outboard motors to 1,200 hp total

Price: $1,069,839
(base with test power)



AVAILABLE POWER:
OUTBOARD

HOW WE TESTED

ENGINES: Twin 600 hp Mercury Verado V-12 outboards **DRIVE/PROP:** Outboard/Verado 16.5" x 26" 4-blade (front), 3-blade (rear); stainless steel **GEAR RATIO:** 2.95:1 (first gear), 2.50:1 (second gear) **FUEL LOAD:** 90 gal. **WATER ON BOARD:** 20 gal. **CREW WEIGHT:** 560 lb.

BOSTON WHALER
Edgewater, Florida; bostonwhaler.com

C
BOATING
CERTIFIED
TEST
RESULTS

SPEED			EFFICIENCY					OPERATION	
rpm	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	angle	sound level
1000	4.9	5.7	4.3	1.1	1.3	421.3	484.8	1	56
1500	6.5	7.5	6.0	1.1	1.3	400.8	461.3	1	60
2000	8.3	9.5	9.7	0.9	1.0	314.0	361.4	2	65
2500	9.6	11.1	14.6	0.7	0.8	243.8	280.5	3	68
3000	10.9	12.6	20.2	0.5	0.6	200.0	230.2	5	72
3500	23.8	27.4	34.5	0.7	0.8	254.7	293.1	5	76
4000	29.1	33.5	39.5	0.7	0.8	271.9	312.9	4	78
4500	34.2	39.4	50.8	0.7	0.8	248.4	285.8	4	79
5000	38.6	44.4	61.6	0.6	0.7	231.1	266.0	4	82
5500	43.3	49.8	85.3	0.5	0.6	187.2	215.4	4	86
6000	47.8	55.1	101.0	0.5	0.5	174.8	201.1	4	88
6400	50.4	58.0	106.5	0.5	0.5	174.6	201.0	3	89

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

PHOTO: COURTESY BOSTON WHALER

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SYLVAN
MERCURY

PHOTO: BILL DOSTER

SCAN ME

To watch our performance video on the Sylvan M-5 CLZ DC, scan this tag or go to boatingmag.com/3456.

Sylvan's target with the new M-5 CLZ DC is to offer a true high-level, ultra-luxury performance pontoon as the top choice for boat buyers seeking the epitome of pontoondom.

We think Sylvan hit the bull's-eye with its aim for the high-end pontoon market. This tri-toon dual-console model brings the Sylvan brand to a new level. It features head-turning styling, and its build execution is top-shelf in our view. The M-5 CLZ DC is loaded with features and advanced styling.

Consider the futuristic appearance of the M-5 CLZ DC for a moment. This comes courtesy of a brand-new aluminum and carbon-fiber perimeter fencing, which is highly detailed and

BOATING CERTIFIED TEST

#3456

SYLVAN M-5 CLZ DC

This high-end tri-toon takes luxury and styling to new levels.

PHOTOS: BILL DOSTER

styled for a forward-leaning appearance that promises luxury, speed and acceleration. In plain speak, this Sylvan looks like it's moving even when it's tied to a dock.

The M-5 CLZ DC really does accelerate. It came to us for testing rigged with top-of-the-line power: a Mercury Verado 400 hp V-10. That's the most powerful mill available for this boat. While we hit a top speed of nearly 55 mph, it rocketed us to 30 mph in just 5.3 seconds. Remember that while speed is fun and cool, all that power will also help you deliver confident performance when you're loaded up with a dozen or more family members and friends. (It's rated for 14 people.)

With all that power, the M-5 handled like a much smaller boat. It proved very responsive to steering and throttle, and the power trim "up" button really makes it fly. We deemed the turning capability sharp, with defined banking. Fuel economy suffers just a bit when hard on the throttle with 400 ponies on tap, but you already know that if you're seeking this kind of boat and power combination. In fact, Sylvan

PHOTO: BILL DOSTER

will rig it with engines as small as 25 hp if, for some odd reason, you desire it or are one who boats on a power-restricted lake.

Our best cruise was at 2,500 rpm and 16 mph, where the Verado 400 was drinking 4.8 gph, achieving 3.3 mpg. But that calculates to 177 miles of range from the 60-gallon fuel tank, leaving 10 percent in reserve—plenty for most users, who will likely put the M-5 CLZ to weekend family watersports and cruising duty.

Comparison shoppers should consider Bennington's 25QFBA, if seeking similar performance and amenities. It's an ultra-luxury 28-footer that sells for $227,593 well-equipped with a potent Yamaha 350 hp V-6 outboard.

Underneath the Sylvan, the tri-toon SPX PR25 Performance Package features triple 27-inch-diameter logs with lifting strakes on the insides of the outer 'toons and both sides of the center 'toon. The optional Big Water Edition features an extended aft deck and extruded lifting strakes. This is a worthwhile option, even if just for the extended aft deck, which makes watersports and sandbar gatherings much more family friendly.

> This boat features full-length pontoons, with formed nose cones, riser brackets, and keels built by robo-automated welders.

Topside, the new exterior perimeter fence is the most striking feature, molded from carbon-fiber panels and painted with clear coat over the carbon-fiber pattern for a unique look. The wraparound curved bow panels feature custom lighting pods that hold the navigation and docking lights.

The optional electric carbon-fiber arch with Bimini top and color-changing dome lighting really completes the futuristic appeal of the M-5. The color-changing lights continue in other places such as on the aft speaker panel, the side logos, and underwater.

Flooring is teak weave, with a new gray hue. The deep-navy pillow-topped seating surface and hex diamond-weave inset is stitched from Cool Touch vinyl, so the dark colors are cool to the touch even on hot days. The piping is cognac, which contrasts the deep navy blue. Together, the deck and furniture team up to provide a plush look, long-term utility and durability, and, of course, a comfortable feel.

The bow seating on the M-5 features facing lounges with rotocast bases, with storage underneath. The extended loungers are contoured inward toward the center of each seat base to create more space in the cockpit without sacrificing comfort.

Dual consoles with safety-glass windshields envelop the cockpit crew; the helm station features a full Simrad digital dash with digital lighted switching (with traditional switch backups), which helps the captain keep tabs on navigation as well as the engine vitals and the boat's electrical systems. High-back contoured captain's chairs for pilot and navigator both swivel, slide, and have foldable armrests for comfort and easy egress. The consoles sit on raised platforms 3 inches above the deck for better visibility, and are fitted with Marine Mat nonskid for comfort and cool touch on feet. A JL Audio system with multiple speakers, subwoofer and amp is featured in the cockpit within easy reach of the captain. Power hydraulic steering helps the captain control the big Verado outboard.

Abaft, the portside lounge is L-shaped with a reversible seatback to allow for forward or aft-facing lounging in multiple positions; the seatback is gas-shock-assisted for easier adjustment.

A stainless-steel safety railing surrounds crew while underway, even when seated facing aft. An extended aft deck, complete with watersports tow bar and Lillipad boarding ladder, makes boarding and watersports prep easy and accessible. —*John Tiger*

High Points

- Sleekly styled carbon-fiber perimeter fence sets the M-5 apart from other boats, and from any Sylvan pontoon to date.
- Cool Touch vinyl is truly a marvel. The rich appearance and plush feel make this furniture more comfortable than many other higher-end luxury craft.
- Rotocast seat bases feature recessed toe-kicks wrapped in vinyl for a highly finished appearance, while the insides are easy to clean.

Low Points

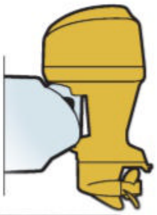
- We'd like to see a larger fuel tank offered. Even a 75-gallon tank would make a significant improvement in range.
- The Extended Deck is such a useful addition that it should be a standard feature.

· **LOA:** 27'8" · **BEAM:** 8'6" · **DRAFT:** NA · **DISPLACEMENT:** 4,350 lb. (without engine) · **TRANSOM DEADRISE:** NA · **BRIDGE CLEARANCE:** NA · **FUEL CAPACITY:** 60 gal. · **MAX HORSEPOWER:** 400 · **AVAILABLE POWER:** Single Honda, Mercury, Suzuki or Yamaha outboard to 400 hp

Price: $238,090
(as tested)

$184,286
(base with 200 hp)

AVAILABLE POWER:
OUTBOARD



HOW WE TESTED

ENGINE: Mercury 400 Verado V-10 outboard **DRIVE/PROP:** Outboard/Mercury Revolution X 16.75" x 20" 4-blade stainless steel **GEAR RATIO:** 1.75:1 **FUEL LOAD:** 28 gal. **CREW WEIGHT:** 250 lb.

SYLVAN MARINE
New Paris, Indiana; sylvanmarine.com

C
BOATING
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TEST
RESULTS

SPEED			EFFICIENCY					OPERATION	
rpm	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	angle	sound level
1000	4.6	5.4	1.8	2.6	3.0	139.5	160.5	1	63
1500	6.7	7.7	2.6	2.6	3.0	139.0	159.9	1	65
2000	9.5	10.9	4.2	2.3	2.6	121.8	140.1	2	68
2500	13.7	15.8	4.8	2.9	3.3	154.0	177.2	2	70
3000	18.3	21.1	6.7	2.7	3.1	147.8	170.1	1	70
3500	22.7	26.1	9.5	2.4	2.7	128.9	148.4	1	73
4000	27.2	31.3	12.3	2.2	2.5	119.4	137.4	1	75
4500	30.8	35.4	14.5	2.1	2.4	114.6	131.8	1	80
5000	35.2	40.5	22.0	1.6	1.8	86.4	99.4	1	83
5500	39.7	45.7	28.0	1.4	1.6	76.5	88.0	1	84
6000	43.5	50.1	32.0	1.4	1.6	73.5	84.5	1	85
6400	47.2	54.3	34.5	1.4	1.6	73.9	85.0	1	90

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

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C
BOATING
CERTIFIED
TEST

VEXUS
VXs21

A bona fide fishing machine built to chase big bass in big water.

RAPTOR
MERCURY
PRO
250
VEXUS

PHOTO: COURTESY VEXUS BOATS—ADVANCED MARINE PERFORMANCE

Vexus Boats’ VXs21 is a full-size bass hunter aimed squarely at serious anglers. This boat is a pure fishing machine designed for running on big water and chasing big bass.

When rigged, like our test boat, with Mercury’s 250 Pro XS V-8, performance proved strong and powerful. It tops out at 70 mph and accelerates on plane in just under 5 seconds, hitting 30 mph in 6.5 seconds. The big 250-horse Mercury outboard is not even the maximum power that this near-22-footer can handle either. The VXs21 is rated for 300 hp and, in my opinion, would likely approach 80 mph with that many ponies pushing it.

The Vexus pad-V hull rides clean at speeds above 30 mph. We noted that its best mileage of

SCAN ME

To see our online photo gallery of the Vexus VXs21, scan this tag or go to boatingmag.com/3457.

AIR WAVE
PEDESTAL

PHOTOS: COURTESY VEXUS BOATS—ADVANCED MARINE PERFORMANCE

4.6 mpg was achieved at a best cruise speed of 32.5 mph and 3,500 rpm, burning just 7 gph. With the VXs21's 58-gallon fuel tank full of fuel, that's a range of 242 miles, leaving 10 percent in reserve. You can confidently fish the big impoundments or a whole weekend on smaller lakes without stopping for gas with this boat.

The performance-engineered pad-V hull delivers great feedback and provides intuitive reaction to throttle and steering inputs. Whether cruising in the 30 mph range or cranking along at 60, it carved turns and hopped wakes for me with authority. The bow flares wide, repelling waves, while providing what experienced anglers know as a Vexus trademark: the mega-size fishing deck. The flared bow of the VXs21 boasts enough room for two anglers to fish side-by-side without crowding.

Vexus' construction features all-composite hand-laid fiberglass infused with vinylester resin, which is the most blister-resistant type of resin. The brilliant gelcoat finish features a combination of polyflake and solid colors. It is expertly done with clean, crisp lines and no jagged edges between

the flake and solid panels that I could find, and I looked at it hard. Do the same if you want to know what a "textbook" job looks like.

It's clear that Vexus knows what serious anglers want in a boat. Look at the layout of the VXs21. At the bow, there's ample space for large, stacked displays. Shallow-water anchor foot controls, cup and tool holders, and switches for the outboard trim and navigation lights are all within easy reach. Bow deck storage includes a 9-foot rod box with a quick-draw shelf for your favorite rods. An 8-foot centerline compartment is equipped with side slots for 3700-style storage boxes, plus added room below the rods for more gear. Just in front of the console, another large locker and day box complete the storage offerings. All of these compartments feature Vexus' Dri-Max system of rain channels, raised moisture dams, weather-tight seals, and stainless-steel compression latches. You can be confident of your stowed gear staying dry aboard this boat.

> The knowledge bench at Vexus goes back 50-plus years and started with the OG of organized bass fishing, Mr. Forrest Wood. So, there's a long history of doing it right.

In the cockpit, the center step features tool holders and a slide-out drawer with a slam latch for quick access to smaller items such as cellphones, wallets and keys. Additional storage in the cockpit includes a hinged box in front of the passenger seating as well as open bins with cup holders positioned alongside both the port and starboard seating. Behind the seating is another slot for a fish net. Handy! In the middle of the cockpit, an insulated cooler is built in. Lunch is at hand.

In the center walkway, we noted stainless-steel latches and full-length hinges fastening thick, deep fiberglass hatch lids to the deck. Water channels wick away moisture from gear stowed below. Plush, deep-bolstered bucket seats feature AirWave pedestals for shock-absorbing comfort. Below the cockpit sits the 58-gallon fuel tank, giving the Vexus a very low center of gravity, which contributes to the confident and precise feel of this boat underway.

The fiberglass console features a 12-inch built-in Garmin multifunction display. A 16-incher will fit the space if you desire a larger one. A Fusion stereo is optional ($752). Digital switching is now standard. Besides reliability and ease of troubleshooting, this comes with a nifty graphic showing all active and dormant circuits and electrical functions The tilt-helm hydraulic-steering system and a manual jack plate are also standard. An adjust-on-the-fly hydraulic jack plate can be optionally installed ($1,924).

Shopping? Bullet's 21XRS checks in at 21 feet, 10 inches long and 7 feet, 6 inches wide. When rigged with the same power—a Mercury 250 Pro XS—it tops out at 79 mph and sells for $122,900 fully decked out.

The VXs21's aft deck features dual livewells with lids. A set of acrylic baffles under the carpeted lids allows for anti-slosh livewell filling and fish-keeping in rougher water. The aft rigging compartment is very cleanly rigged, in my opinion, with all batteries and pumps fully accessible. The Minn Kota Raptor 12-volt shallow-water anchors are installed by being through-bolted directly to the transom. A stainless-steel, stowable boarding ladder is standard, a great convenience, and a safety feature in compliance with ABYC standards. *—John Tiger*

High Points

- ▶ The aft boarding ladder features an "idiot light" on the dash, which is activated if it's left deployed. For those who have ever returned to port with the ladder splashing along, this is a cool tech feature.
- ▶ The easy-driving nature of the VXs belies its high-performance propensity. No advanced degree in pad-boat driving is necessary; even neophyte pilots can balance this boat after a few passes.

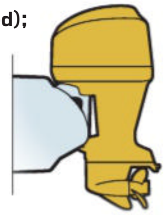
Low Point

- ▶ While the 70 mph top end will likely satisfy most, we'd probably opt for the 300 hp Mercury to get closer to 80.

· **LOA:** 21'11" · **BEAM:** 8'1" · **DRAFT:** 1'8" · **DISPLACEMENT:** 4,400 lb. (boat, engine and trailer) · **TRANSOM DEADRISE:** 17 degrees · **BRIDGE CLEARANCE:** NA · **FUEL CAPACITY:** 58 gal. · **MAXIMUM HORSEPOWER:** 300 · **AVAILABLE POWER:** Single Mercury or Yamaha outboard to 300 hp

Price (MSRP):
$117,894 (as tested);
$94,513 (base)

AVAILABLE POWER:
OUTBOARD



HOW WE TESTED

ENGINE: Mercury FourStroke 250 hp V-8 **DRIVE/PROP:** Outboard/Mercury Fury 14" x 23" 3-blade stainless steel **GEAR RATIO:** 1.75:1 **FUEL LOAD:** 30 gal. **CREW WEIGHT:** 250 lb.

VEXUS BOATS—ADVANCED MARINE PERFORMANCE
Flippin, Arkansas; vexusboats.com

C

BOATING
CERTIFIED
TEST
RESULTS

SPEED			EFFICIENCY					OPERATION	
rpm	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	angle	sound level
1000	4.9	5.7	1.6	3.1	3.5	160.2	184.3	1	61
1500	6.4	7.4	2.4	2.7	3.1	138.9	159.9	2	65
2000	7.3	8.4	3.9	1.9	2.1	97.1	111.8	4	67
2500	8.2	9.5	5.7	1.4	1.7	75.2	86.5	4	71
3000	20.3	23.4	6.2	3.3	3.8	171.2	197.0	2	80
3500	28.2	32.5	7.0	4.0	4.6	210.6	242.4	2	84
4000	35.6	41.0	9.6	3.7	4.3	193.7	222.9	1	85
4500	40.8	47.0	12.2	3.3	3.9	174.7	201.1	1	87
5000	45.2	52.0	16.4	2.8	3.2	143.8	165.5	1	91
5500	53.8	61.9	19.6	2.7	3.2	143.3	164.9	1	92
6000	59.6	68.6	23.2	2.6	3.0	134.1	154.4	1	94
6150	60.8	70.0	23.8	2.6	2.9	133.4	153.5	1	95

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

PHOTO: COURTESY VEXUS BOATS—ADVANCED MARINE PERFORMANCE

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BOATING CERTIFIED TEST

#3458

BAYLINER V20

This affordable family-fun package provides on-water entertainment in both sterndrive and outboard models.

PHOTO: COURTESY BAYLINER BOATS

Bayliner was founded in 1957 to bring seaworthy family boats to the water with an attractive bundled package, including boat, motor and trailer at a budget price. Today, this brand, now under the Brunswick umbrella, is one of the largest recreational-boat builders, and its newly redesigned V20 bowrider replaces one of its most popular models.

Bayliner didn't just move the cup holders around in the original long-in-the-tooth 20-footer. Instead, it redesigned the boat from keel to windshield, transom to forepeak, to meet the expectations of today's boaters. Bayliner offers the V20 in both sterndrive and outboard configurations. We tested the outboard version on the salty Indian River near Edgewater, Florida.

V20
MERCURY
PRO XS
V20
BAYLINER

SCAN ME

To see our online photo gallery of the Bayliner V20, scan this tag or go to boatingmag.com/3458.

PHOTOS: COURTESY BAYLINER BOATS

Both versions of the V20 display a wider beam, crisp new lines, and a sweeping, cockpit-surrounding windshield with cross-curved glass for an upscale look. The outboard version will be most popular in salt water, where full trim and tilt helps manage the boat in shallow water, and the easy maintenance and ability to quickly flush the engine are essential to its long, happy life.

Brunswick's influence on the redesigned boat is unmistakable due to the ownership of Mercury outboards, as well as component manufacturers such as BEP for battery connections and various electrical components for switching and wiring. The company now builds boats almost completely within the boundaries of Brunswick brands, enhancing efficient integration of all onboard systems.

Our V20 had the Merc 175 hp Pro XS V-6 outboard, which gave us enjoyable performance, including a snappy hole shot, both with four- and later, two-passenger loads. The top speed just shy of 45 mph was barely influenced by the larger passenger load. We did notice slightly better

midrange fuel economy with two passengers, and the boat made almost 4.5 mpg. Mercury reports comparable fuel economy and midrange speed with the 150 while losing a couple of miles per hour at wide-open throttle. The 150 adds $6,000 to the base price ($46,495) of the V20 with the 115; the 175 comes in at about $12,000 more. Some boaters will be happiest with the 150 and an extra $6,000 in their pocket, and others will say, "Nope, I want max performance and will opt for the 175." We'd support either choice, but avoid the 115, which will burn the same amount or more fuel working harder while achieving less speed and passenger-carrying midrange power than the two more-powerful options. One great reason to buy the 175 is integrated power steering, adding smooth maneuverability to complement the equally smooth throttle and shift functions.

> The all-composite hull, deck, and stringer grid provide lifetime durability and smooth, crisp handling.

Tahoe's 210 S is the V20's head-to-head competitor and sells for $50,995 with a Merc 150 before freight and prep. It departs from traditional bowrider style using acrylic windscreens instead of the V20's full cockpit cross-curved glass windshield. The Tahoe is narrower (8-foot-2-inch beam) and longer (21 feet, 5 inches), but the math works out to comparable deck space. The T21 is standard with a proprietary touchscreen display. The V20 offers an upgrade to a 7-inch Simrad and Mercury Vessel View Link ($2,430) or a 9-inch Simrad display ($2,645 and well worth the extra $200).

The dashboard at the helm and the passenger console are finished in a glossy-black gelcoat for an attractive contrast with a bit of a performance feel to it. There was a tilt wheel (standard) on our tester. The dash layout was logical and easy to manage from the captain's seat, with switches higher and stereo controller lower and left.

In a day when a 20-footer often sells north of $80,000, the V20's 50-something price tag (base plus $6,000 for the 150) is refreshing, especially when you review the standard features such as a diamond-pattern nonskid deck and the thickly cushioned and supple upholstery. The L-lounge stretches from the back of the front passenger bucket to the starboard-side transom door. The captain and passenger bucket seats swivel and slide for extra legroom.

The passenger console has a large compartment that drains to the bilge and can be used as a cooler or for dry storage. Another cooler chest is beneath the jump seat behind the captain's seat. Dry storage beneath the bow and L bench seat is finished for easy maintenance.

Where does Bayliner save money on this commendable 20-footer? There is no superfluous cockpit trim, neither billet nor stainless steel. Grab handles are vinyl, but there's an upgrade for stainless. Our tester lacked pullup cleats, but the fixed cleats looked good and were properly positioned. A cocktail table is optional, saving dollars for a feature seldom used and frequently in the way. Tow eyes on the transom are standard, but a tow pylon ($535) or wake tower ($6,115 with integrated Bimini top) is available at a reasonable upcharge. The standard AM/FM/MP3 stereo can be upgraded to a "stage 1" Rockford Fosgate system ($360) with 6-inch speakers or "stage 2" upgrade that includes a subwoofer and amplifier ($1,145).

At one time, Bayliner's unofficial motto was: "Bayliner brings you exactly what you need to enjoy boating." After testing the V20, I not only agree with that motto, but I also appreciate the enhanced style and color options that add dockside appeal and build in pride in ownership. —*Randy Vance*

High Points

- ▶ Buyers' choice of monotone or two-tone hull colors is free.
- ▶ It comes standard with a painted trailer for fresh water, but a $360 upcharge gets you a galvanized trailer for salt water.
- ▶ Cross-curve windshield is a nicety that competitive boats don't offer.

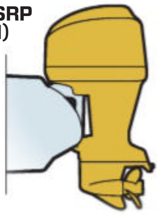
Low Points

- ▶ The boat lacks midship cleats, a feature normally so common that we seldom mention it.
- ▶ The engine compartment is converted to storage aboard the outboard version, but a subfloor in it restricts access to the bilge plumbing.

· **LOA:** 20'4" · **BEAM:** 8'4" · **DRAFT (MAX):** 1'7" · **DISPLACEMENT (APPROX.):** 3,500 lb. (with 175 hp) · **TRANSOM DEADRISE:** 20 degrees · **BRIDGE CLEARANCE:** 4'3" · **FUEL CAPACITY:** 45 gal. · **MAX HORSEPOWER:** 175 · **AVAILABLE POWER:** Single Mercury outboard from 115 to 175 hp

Price: $71,583 (MSRP as tested, fully loaded)

AVAILABLE POWER:
OUTBOARD



HOW WE TESTED

ENGINE: Mercury 175 hp **DRIVE/PROP:** Outboard/Enertia 14.75" x 16" 3-blade stainless steel **GEAR RATIO:** 1.85:1 **FUEL LOAD:** 35 gal. **WATER ON BOARD:** 0 gal. **CREW WEIGHT:** 400 lb.

BAYLINER BOATS
Knoxville, Tennessee; baylinerboats.com

C
BOATING
CERTIFIED
TEST
RESULTS

SPEED			EFFICIENCY					OPERATION	
rpm	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	angle	sound level
1000	4.6	5.4	1.0	4.6	5.4	188.3	216.7	0	61
1500	6.3	7.2	1.6	3.9	4.5	158.4	182.3	1	72
2000	7.0	8.1	2.6	2.7	3.1	109.0	125.4	4	69
2500	11.4	13.1	3.5	3.3	3.7	131.7	151.6	7	79
3000	18.8	21.6	4.4	4.3	4.9	172.8	198.8	5	87
3500	22.9	26.4	5.8	3.9	4.5	159.9	184.0	4	88
4000	27.6	31.8	8.2	3.4	3.9	136.3	156.8	3	88
4500	31.9	36.8	9.4	3.4	3.9	137.6	158.3	3	89
5000	35.8	41.3	13.1	2.7	3.1	110.8	127.5	3	90
5500	38.4	44.2	16.0	2.4	2.8	97.1	111.8	3	91

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

PHOTO: COURTESY BAYLINER BOATS

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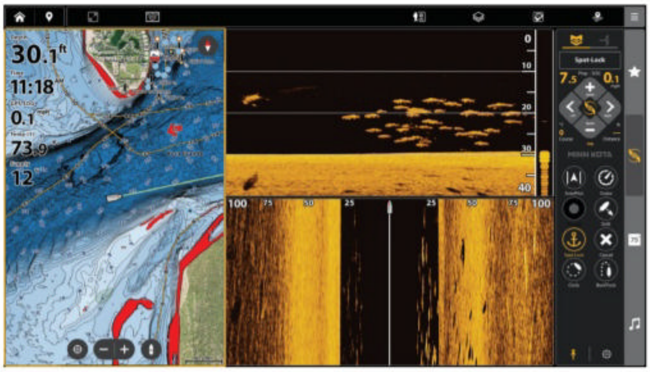
By Randy Vance

MINN KOTA RIPTIDE INSTINCT QUEST

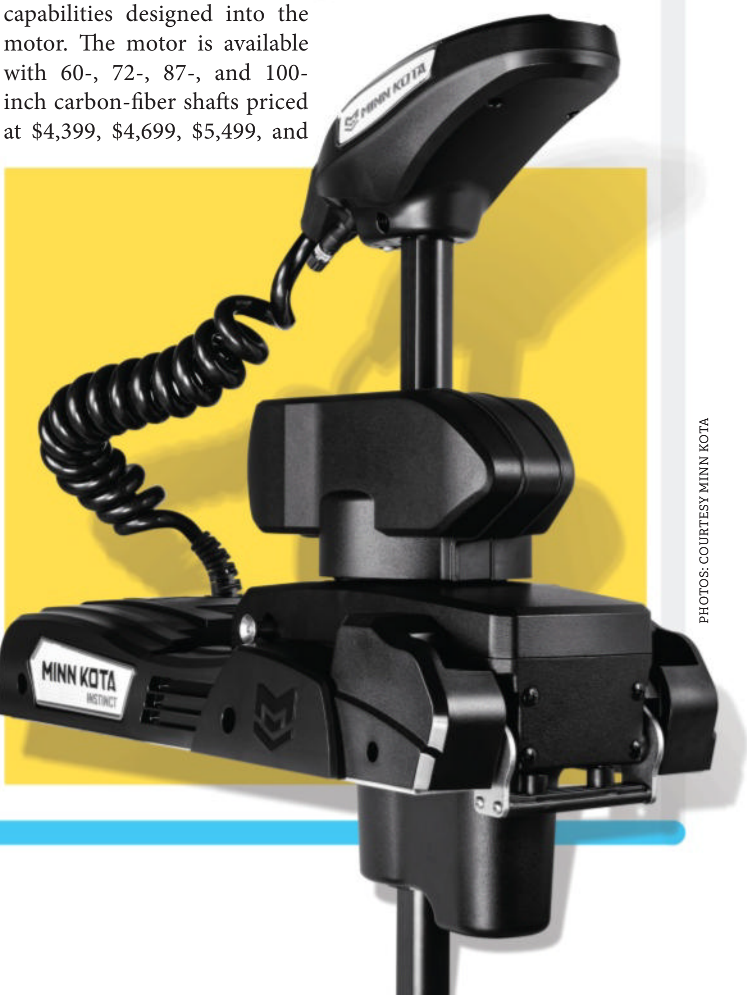
This new trolling motor is just part of the One-Boat Network.



The Riptide Instinct Quest from Minn Kota is more than the sum of its parts. Intuitive controls, multiple points of operation, and complete networking capabilities with other Johnson Outdoors marine products such as Humminbird Apex and Solix multifunction displays and Minn Kota Raptor shallow-water anchors give handy integration to the entire system of boat control.

First, the auto-deploy system on this saltwater-grade trolling motor is sturdier and more reliable than past models. I've run Ulterra motors for six years without a failure but have had to use the awkward manual retract and resetting process to pull up the motor after jamming it on the bottom during deployment. That's not an easy on-the-water job. This new motor's mounting and deployment system is far more robust and forgiving of impact. I have—ahem—proved that in my fishing.

Impact forgiveness is a valuable side effect of the offshore capabilities designed into the motor. The motor is available with 60-, 72-, 87-, and 100-inch carbon-fiber shafts priced at $4,399, $4,699, $5,499, and $6,099, respectively. The shafts are far beefier than the inshore models and far less flexible than competitors for better control. Only the 72-inch and



BEEFY CONSTRUCTION is just one of the motor's hot new features. One-Boat connectivity to power anchors and MFDs allows multiple points of control.

PHOTOS: COURTESY MINN KOTA

REMOTE FOOT CONTROL is also possible with the optional deck pedal. Connect to Apex or Solix MFDs via Ethernet or Bluetooth.

above shafts require an included gunwale brace to secure the motor when the boat's planing. The 60-inch shaft, long enough on my Ranger 2510 Bay boat in all but the roughest water, exhibits little flexing at speed.

As a propulsion device, its powerful brushless motor operates on 24 or 36 volts. Brushless motors are so efficient, they produce more torque on less power, and that proved evident on the Ranger—a heavy model with a wide beam and large center console—and almost all are delivered with a massive hardtop, if not a second station. I have only 60 amps of lithium 36-volt power, but I've never come close to running out. Even better, the thrust is applied gradually from full stop to top speed, so anglers aren't jostled about when power is initiated. Even at a right-angle turn, the acceleration to full happens firmly but gently, moving the boat where you want it without throwing anglers off balance.

The unit's mounting bracket and robotic deployment equipment is heavy-duty for durability and reliability in offshore fishing. But that strength comes at a price: The motor, weighing in at 90 pounds, took real effort to lift to the bow of the Ranger in the shop. That said, the weight of the motor had no ill effect on performance over the lighter Minn Kota Ulterra that drove the boat before.

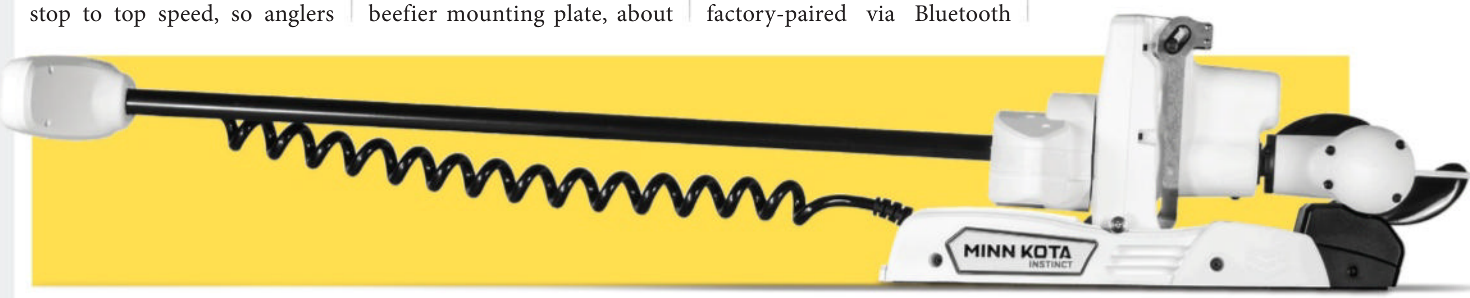
Installation is simple using a Minn Kota RTA 62 quick-attach mount. This has a beefier mounting plate, about 40 percent thicker than those recommended for the old Ulterra. Once in place, a lockable slide bolt allows removal of the motor for secure, theft-proof storage. Further easing the installation is the elimination of a separate heading sensor. That capability is built into the motor.

The motor can be controlled with the handheld remote factory-paired via Bluetooth to the motor. Spot Lock, controlled drift, and heading lock are three autopilot settings enabled by the controller. A significant improvement in the controller is a motor-position sensor that indicates on the LCD screen where your motor is pointed, handy if your view is blocked by anglers at the bow.

The One-Boat Network comes into high play when an Ethernet cable (included) connects the motor to Solix or Apex MFDs. This enables the motor to follow depth contours chosen on the display. All of the most used controls on the handheld are also available on the MFD. The Quest will also connect via Bluetooth to the Apex, but that bars other Bluetooth connections, such as the Raptor's.

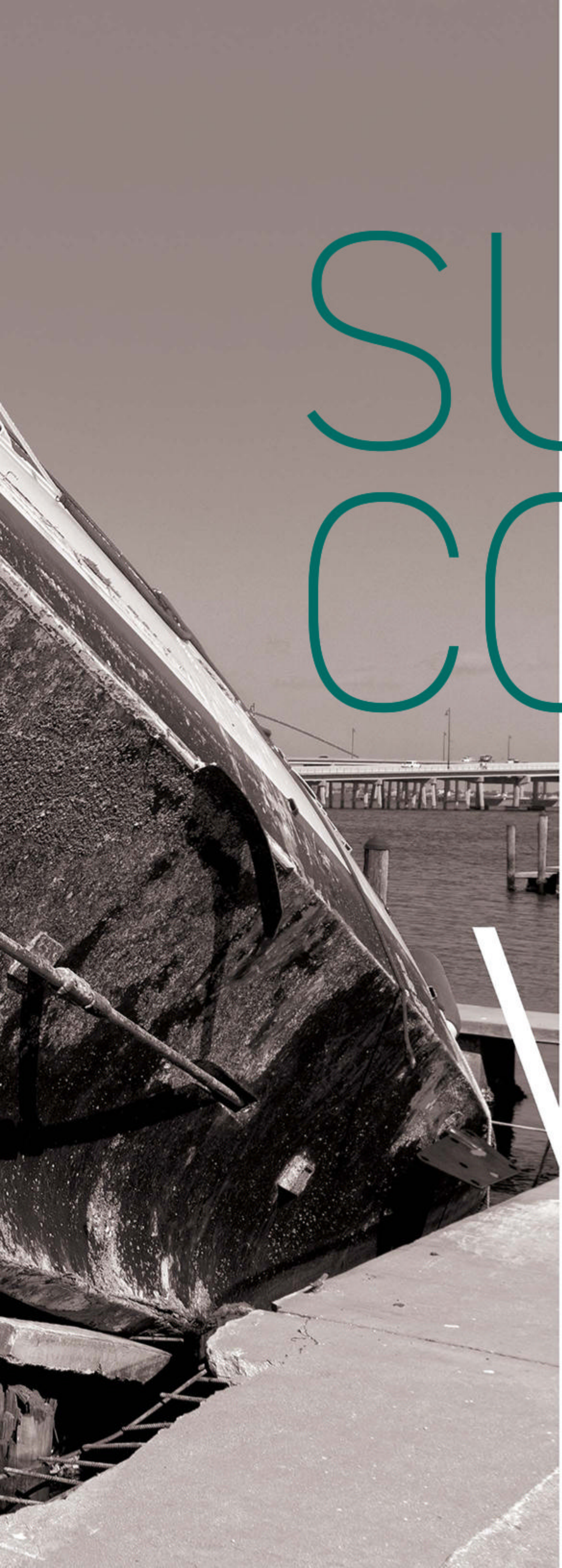
If Bluetooth connectivity to the MFD is not enough, the One-Boat app on a mobile device can connect the Raptor shallow-water anchors and motor to provide complete control. We were surprised that the controller uses replaceable AA batteries, and if they go dead on the water, or if you forget the remote, the app saves the day.

The motor is an outstanding feat of engineering in its own right, but the One-Boat app, which allows firmware updates, settings adjustments, and full operational control over the devices on board, is icing on the cake.



PHOTOS: COURTESY MINN KOTA

Liv'n A Dream
Indian Rocks Beach,FL



SUNK COSTS

Fiberglass boats never die. But what happens when they are abandoned?

By Morgan Sherburne

PHOTOS: (FROM LEFT) RANDY VANCE, COURTESY VDRF PROJECT

PHOTO: COURTESY VDRF PROJECT

Mike Provost was boating with his family one day when they saw a disintegrating boat tied up to a tree on the shore of Long Creek, one of the hundreds of creeks threading through the Virginia Beach area and feeding into Chesapeake Bay. Long Creek is part of a waterway in which Provost frequently boats with his wife, Ashley, and their kids.

The 30-foot cabin cruiser looked abandoned. It was floating, but weeds were growing through the hull, and debris and broken boat components littered its decks.

"We're going by this suspicious craft, and my kids asked what was going on with that boat," Provost explains. "I said, 'Well, I think somebody just left it there.' They asked, 'Well, Daddy, who's going to clean it up?' I said, 'I will.'

"That was a mistake."

Provost thought his job was finished when he called local authorities for assistance. But several trips later, the family saw the cabin cruiser still in the water.

One day, Provost noticed that the boat had been relocated into the North Landing River, lodging onshore of First Landing State Park. "Truly a national treasure, it's the most visited state park in Virginia," he says. "It's a place we like to hike and spend time outdoors as a family. That's when I kind of got obsessed."

Provost is a retired US Navy Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman chief warrant officer. Over 21 years in the military, he spent 52 months abroad in 26 countries. He also holds a USCG 100-Ton Master Captain's License. In short, he's not someone who gives up easily. He called 100 different people in 30 different state, federal and nonprofit offices, trying to find some entity that would agree to clean up the boat since the owner wouldn't.

"I was just relentless. I called every single person I could think of, and when they said they couldn't help me, they gave me a lead," Provost explains. "Frankly, I annoyed a lot of people, but I was just unwilling to let this boat sit there because it was, in my opinion, a clear difference of right and wrong."

Finally, Provost took matters into his own hands. Following a list of procedures outlined by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, he gained the owner's permission to remove the boat.

"And we were off to the races," he explains. "We established a GoFundMe campaign. We had a very generous corporate sponsor jump in, then a private donor did a bulk of the payment. Then we got to work."

Provost and his fellow volunteers dismantled and removed the boat in two days. And so Provost's nonprofit, the Vessel Disposal and Reuse Foundation, was born.

Since its formation in December 2021, the foundation has disposed of 77 vessels, removed more than 718,000 pounds of debris from Virginia waterways, and recycled more than 27,000 pounds of metal. Provost has his sights set on 11 more vessels, but he needs the funding to proceed.

According to Virginia law, it's illegal for owners to abandon their boats. In 2022, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission received $3 million from the Virginia General Assembly to create the Abandoned or Derelict Vessel Program, aimed at removing abandoned and derelict boats from tidal or nontidal marine waters of the state. Grants through the program are available to local governments and municipalities for boat removal.

The problem, unfortunately, is not unique to the Chesapeake. Derelict vessels litter popular waterways from coast to coast. Each one is not just an eyesore or an environmental concern, but it's also a potential hazard to other boaters. Here's how others besides Provost are taking action.

A NATIONWIDE PROBLEM

During the 1960s and '70s, fiberglass boats exploded in popularity. But fiberglass boats, unlike cars or boats made of aluminum or other metals, can't be scrapped. The fiberglass is not always recyclable, and the cost of disposing of the boats can be steep.

The BoatUS Foundation is the nonprofit arm of BoatUS, the country's largest organization of recreational boat owners. It recently won a $10 million grant through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act to tackle the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels, or ADVs.

"When you buy a boat, the last thing you think about is getting rid of it," says Alanna Keating, director of outreach for the BoatUS Foundation. "I had a 1986 Volvo in my 20s. Somebody wanted it, and they paid me to take it away. Somebody will always take your car for free or give you money. It's not the same with a boat. There are no sustainable disposal options for boats."

Keating estimates the average cost to dispose of a nonoperating—but still floating—25- to 30-foot boat is anywhere from $5,000 to $25,000. Depending on location, availability of services and the condition of the boat, disposal can cost several thousand dollars, she said—even if the boat is on a trailer. It's just easier for people to abandon boats or sell them for pennies on the dollar.

The grant will help the BoatUS foundation issue awards to communities and organizations to remove ADVs from local waterways. The foundation is also working with state governments, local organizations and the boating public to build a national database to identify abandoned vessels for removal. A third part of the grant funded a conference, called Turning the Tide, that BoatUS hosted this past February. The conference brought industry experts and academics together to discuss end-of-life options for boats, including addressing challenges for recycling fiberglass boats.

> "Frankly, I annoyed a lot of people, but I was just unwilling to let this boat sit there because it was, in my opinion, a clear difference of right and wrong."

Keating says that inland areas can pose a particular challenge for ADV removals. "There's never been funding on a federal level for inland areas, and most of the time, I don't think they even know the scope of the problem because the programs aren't there for them to address it."

The BoatUS Foundation plans to use the bulk of its grant to help with these types of removals. The foundation began to award the first wave of grantees this past spring. Awardees and all grant applicants also were invited to the February conference in order to learn about disposal options as well.

Keating developed the national

PHOTO: RANDY VANCE

PHOTO: COURTESY TOWBOATUS FT. LAUDERDALE

ADV database in partnership with state agencies based on a survey of the public and partner organizations working in ADV removal. The database was on track to be available online by this summer so that the boating public might also help in tracking the issue.

"The big question is: How many ADVs are out there? The answer is: Nobody knows," Keating points out. "We are uniquely positioned to have that strong connection with BoatUS and the over 700,000 BoatUS members who are on the water all the time who can tell us about those ADVs."

STATE OF URGENCY

Trashing a boat is expensive. Removing a disintegrating boat from a waterway is vastly more expensive—notwithstanding the additional environmental cost of abandoned boats.

Troy Wood is the program manager for the Derelict Vessel Removal Program, part of Washington's Department of Natural Resources. He points out the environmental impact of abandoned boats.

"Other than the obvious things like fuel and oil that spill out of vessels, there's a lot of hidden stuff in these vessels that pose a risk to human safety in the environment such as asbestos," Wood says. "Copper bottom paints shed into the environment. There have been studies that have found contaminants in orcas that were directly related to possibly derelict and abandoned vessels."

Washington initiated its program in 2002, and since then has removed more than 1,500 vessels from 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands. The state funds its program through a tax on the registration of vessels as well as a portion of sales tax on sold marine products.

The program also won funding through NOAA's Marine Debris Program to both help remove vessels from marine waters and establish a vessel turn-in program. With the money, Wood and his team of six employees coordinated the removal of seven vessels from South Puget Sound and sponsored six vessel turn-in events. The last event accepted about 30 vessels from the Swinomish Tribe in Skagit County.

> "Somebody will always take your car for free or give you money. It's not the same with a boat. There are no sustainable disposal options for boats."

The state prioritizes removal based on the boat's threat to human safety and the environment. To take custody of the vessel for removal, the state has to make contact with the owner to give them the opportunity to remove it themselves. The boats can languish for as little as a week or for a few years, Wood says, depending on the human and environmental risk. There are currently about 300 identified abandoned vessels in the state.

Once the boats are recovered, Wood has to grapple with what to do with the removed and surrendered boats.

"Obviously, we recycle the aluminum and steel vessels, but our problem is the wooden and fiberglass vessels. How do we recycle that? Because we don't want to take the trash out of the water and just stick it on land," Wood points out.

The state found a facility that accepts the crushed boats and recycles what they can. What they can't, they sell as "hog fuel" to factories that manufacture concrete or paper.

"There was a study done in Rhode Island a few years ago where they burned fiberglass vessels instead of what they normally burned to produce concrete, and it lowered their emissions," Wood reveals. "You still get emissions from burning fiberglass vessels, but it's not as bad as their normal fuel."

The Washington program is making good headway. Prior to the watercraft excise tax, the program's budget was about $2 million every two years. Now, the tax funnels about an extra $8 million into the program every two years.

"We quadrupled our budget, and we more than quadrupled the amount of vessels we were pulling out," Wood says. Over the 2022 and 2023 fiscal years, the program removed 319 vessels from state waterways.

In addition to the removal program, Washington also has a vessel turn-in program, which Wood hopes boaters will use, to prevent boats from becoming abandoned in the first place.

THE FLORIDA PROGRAM

Phil Horning, administrator of Florida's Derelict Vessel Program, has a map of Florida peppered with dots. Each dot represents an abandoned boat that the state is actively working to remove.

"If you took the map away, the vessels, which are the dots on the map, would make a perfect outline of Florida," Horning says. "They're everywhere, and they're mostly on the coast."

Florida has a little more than 1.2 million registered boaters. For how many boaters the state has, the rate of abandoned boats—though a serious problem—is pretty low.

People who abandon boats in Florida receive a misdemeanor citation. In each case, the derelict boat has to be investigated by a sworn law enforcement officer, and then the misdemeanor charge has to wind its way through the court system. The owners, if known, receive an opportunity for a civil hearing on vessel removal.

"Ultimately, the vessel owner is responsible for their vessel, and at the end of life, they should be taking this thing off the water and disposing of it," Horning believes. "But what happens in many cases is that they sell it to somebody for a dollar, and those people don't have the means to take care of it, and it ends up becoming a $12,000 removal."

Ultimately, Florida may have found a solution: the Florida Vessel Turn-In Program. The state established the program in September 2022—just in time for Hurricane Ian to hit. The program began shifting into gear in March 2023. Since then, boaters whose watercraft meet a certain set of criteria have turned in 155 vessels, which have been removed and disposed of. Twenty-seven are on schedule for removal, and 19 are currently in review.

Both programs are under Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and are currently funded through the state. The vessel turn-in program is completely voluntary, and typically the boat owners are self-reporting, according to Horning.

"It's a win-win situation," he says. "We get a potential derelict vessel off the water before it goes derelict. The owner doesn't have a criminal penalty imposed against them, and they aren't charged for disposal. They can get rid of this thing before it becomes their nightmare."

CLEANING UP

Abandoned vessels are a problem, but a growing number of states have created or are piloting programs to prevent them. Florida modeled its program after similar ones in California, Oregon, Texas and Washington. In 2024, South Carolina piloted a turn-in program, funded by NOAA, for people and businesses in the state's eight coastal counties.

In Virginia, Provost hopes to add a vessel turn-in program to his nonprofit. Preferring to work through corporate and private sponsors, he just needs funding.

"The way that we solve this is to treat the root cause," Provost explains. "There's no easy and affordable way to get rid of an unwanted vessel.

"So we need to get these vessels while they're at risk of becoming abandoned and derelict," he adds. "And frankly, nobody's doing it, so somebody has to."

TURN IT IN

With all the problems caused by abandoned boats, the best solution seems to be to make it easier for owners to turn in their old vessels before they become a risk. If you have an old vessel that you can no longer maintain or operate, here is a list of just a few programs that you can contact for help.

Florida Vessel Turn-In Program (VTIP)
myfwc.com/boating/waterway/vtip

Rhode Island Fiberglass Vessel Recycling Program
rimta.org/environmental-stewardship/fiberglass-vessel-recycling-program

California Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel Exchange
dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28768

Washington (State) Vessel Turn-In Program
dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/aquatics/derelict-vessels/vessel-turn-program

Oregon Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Program
oregon.gov/dsl/waterways/pages/adv.aspx

South Carolina Vessel Turn-In Programs
(run on a sporadic basis, check for opportunities)
des.sc.gov/programs/bureau-coastal-management/beachfront-management/marine-debris/abandoned-and-derelict-vessels

For nationwide information on abandoned and derelict vessel programs, visit marinedebris.noaa.gov/resources/abandoned-and-derelict-vessels-info-hub.

PHOTO: COURTESY RICK LEGOW

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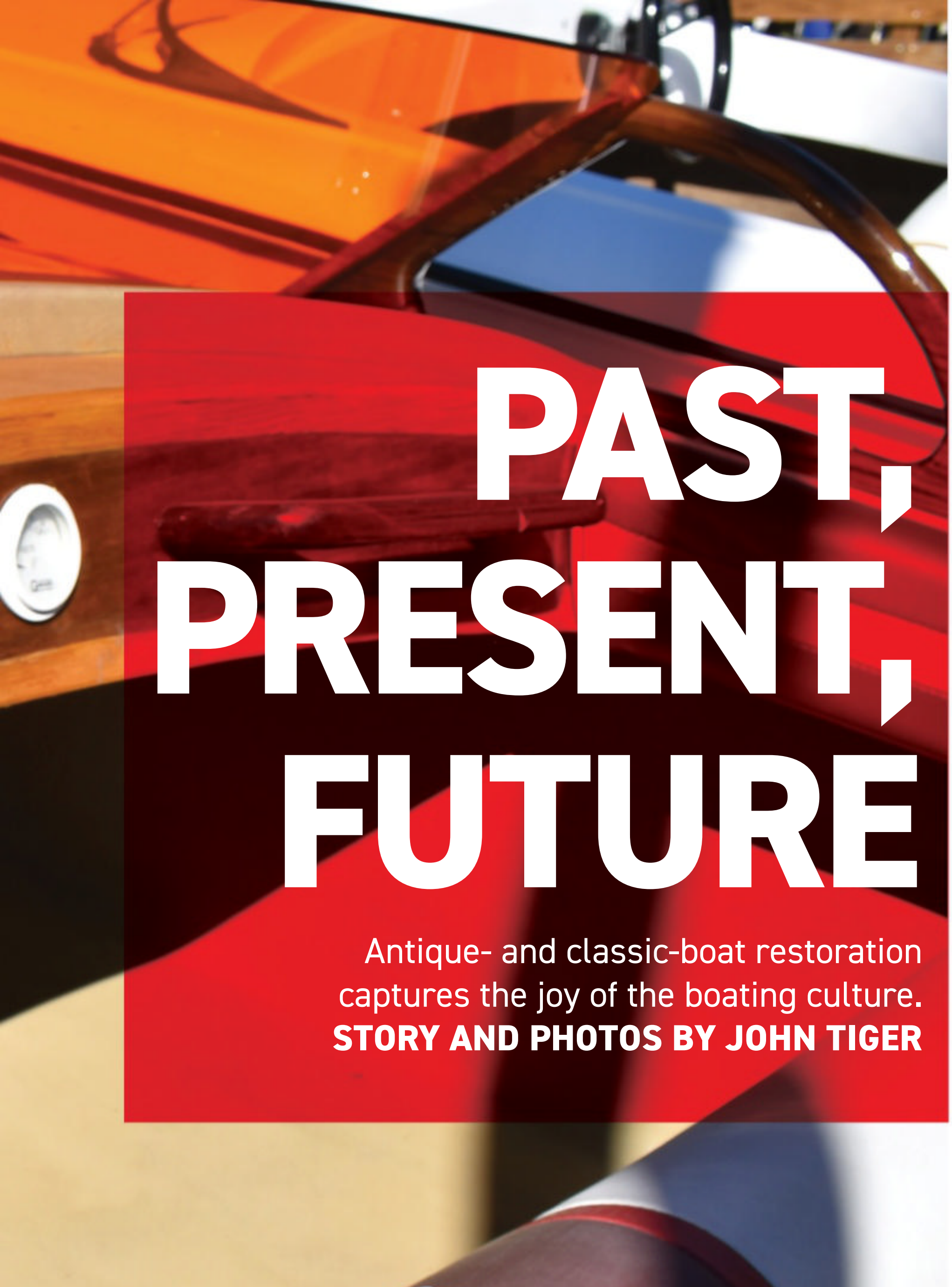


PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Antique- and classic-boat restoration captures the joy of the boating culture.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN TIGER

It's no secret that boats are, in today's parlance, hella expensive. You can spend well over $50,000, $100,000, even $150,000 on a medium-size runabout, fishing boat or wakeboard boat. So, if you want to get on the water and you don't want to dump all that scratch into a boat at once or take out a mega-loan on what's basically a seasonal-use toy, what to do? Would you consider restoring an old boat?

Recently, I spent the weekend at the annual boat show held in Tavares, Florida, by the Sunnyland chapter of the Antique & Classic Boat Society. I last visited this show a dozen years ago, and wow, things have changed—for the better. The show has improved and the participants prove much more interesting, simply because… times have changed. This means that unlike in the past, you don't need a perfectly restored, high-dollar "golden woodie" to participate. Now, fiberglass classics (even outboards!) from the 1950s through the '80s are not only accepted but welcomed.

I went to the show not just to observe, but also to participate. I displayed my vintage 1968 14-foot Glastron Jetflite outboard runabout rigged with a 1975 Evinrude Hustler 75 hp two-stroke outboard, with the Florida Chapter of the Antique Outboard Motor Club (AOMCI), which has its own section at the Sunnyland show. While far from perfect, what with its aging gelcoat and nonmatching engine, it was good enough to win a plaque for Best Classic at the Sunday morning awards ceremony. This is a perfect example of a classic '60s runabout, and a great starter rig. My wife, Laura, and I have less than $6,000 invested, and while this boat is

SUNNYLAND
MN 6695 DF

WINNER WINNER The author's beloved 1968 Glastron with an Evinrude 75 outboard made a great presentation at the show.

WOOD IS GOOD Mike Hodes is about to cast off in his Wason wooden triple-cockpit runabout and take a spin (left). Fifteen-year-old Owen Turner enjoys the day on his restored Aristo-Craft Torpedo (below).

better suited to a couple than a family, it's a fun, fast and attention-grabbing rig, whether you're at a show or simply gassing it up at the local fuel dock.

Here's what I found by diving headfirst into the antique-boat-club circuit. As time marches on, boats from boomers' youth are more and more desirable—and becoming more collectible. Because they weren't built all that long ago, they're also arguably easier to restore. And it doesn't matter if your classic boat is perfectly restored, with matching engine and rigging; at this year's show, many fiberglass and wood classics were well-presented whether they were flawlessly restored and matched with the "correct" engine or rebuilt to the owner's liking and fitted with a modern powerplant.

What makes getting and staying involved today much easier versus a decade or three ago is the ease of connecting and communicating with other like-minded folks. The internet and social media have made everything faster and easier. Getting connected with a local club, finding boats, engines and parts, and getting help when needed are all more convenient by using your phone or computer. Of course, a big part of the fun is putting in the time to

SKI SEASON Mike and Manjot Sweet are sweet on classic Correct Craft ski boats; above, they show off their immaculate 1970 Barracuda, one of several classic ski boats in their collection.

resurrect a rig, and the thrill of firing it up on the water for the first time. However, an equally gratifying part of the experience is the social aspect. Most clubs have at least one or two gatherings annually, and the Southern clubs such as Florida's Sunnyland and AOMCI chapters have many more, thanks to their nearly year-round boating weather.

To get a sense of who participates and different levels of involvement, I spoke with a handful of enthusiasts at the Sunnyland show. Here's what they had to say about their participation, and why it might be a blast for you to try too.

MIKE HODES (CLERMONT, FLORIDA) displayed a beautifully restored wooden 1929 Wason runabout with Evinrude Big Four outboard. Hodes has been an antique-boat and -outboard enthusiast most of his life, has a handful of restored rigs, and serves as the secretary of the Florida chapter of the Antique Outboard Motor Club. As Hodes notes, "I got my first outboard when I was in 4th grade from my step-grandfather who was a boat racer in the 1930s, and I've been hooked on boats and outboards ever since."

OWEN TURNER (DAWSONVILLE, GEORGIA) is a remarkably poised 15-year-old with a great pedigree in vintage boating. He displayed an awesome 1956 Aristo-Craft Torpedo runabout with a matching restored 1957 Mercury Mark-55E outboard. Turner belongs to the Aristo-Craft Turner family, who still operate Aristo-Craft as a fully functional facility. Interested parties can purchase a new Aristo-Craft or have theirs professionally restored there. "I was pretty much born into classic boating, and as I've grown, I've become more and more appreciative of the classic lines and the meticulous work required to restore these boats," Turner says.

MIKE AND MANJOT SWEET (CLEVELAND, OHIO) trailered a wonderfully restored 1970 Correct-Craft Barracuda inboard runabout. The Sweets are especially proud that their Barracuda is equipped with the rare Holman-Moody Ford high-performance engine. The Sweets purchased this boat in Wisconsin and trailered it home a few years ago to restore it. Mike relays, "We use this and its twin, a green 1969 Barracuda we own, as everyday boats for skiing and cruising, as well as enjoying displaying at shows."

ED NUGENT (SARASOTA, FLORIDA, BY WAY OF CANADA), "like Ted Nugent, but without the 'T' and a lot less money," brought a 1968 Bertram Sportsman—a rare center-console (fewer than 100 made)—with a straight-six MerCruiser sterndrive. Nugent uses this boat as an everyday boat, as well as displaying it at shows. Ed restored the boat over a three-year period, building it back from a bare shell. "We were looking for a stable boat that was good in big water, and when I saw the Sportsman, with its layout, I had to have one," Nugent remarks.

CENTER OF ATTENTION Canadian Ed Nugent stows a few lines in the bow compartment of his classic 1968 Bertram Sportsman center-console sterndrive runabout.

LOU RONCA (MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA) joined the Sunnyland Chapter of the ACBS in 1998 and has been an active participant ever since. Ronca had a major hand in starting the Sunnyland Chapter Apprentice Mentoring Program for Youth, which teaches young folks about boatbuilding. He has restored a total of eight antique runabouts and has a pontoon boat on Lake Dora. At this show, Ronca displayed a very sharp Century wooden runabout he had just purchased. "I don't have to do anything but drive it. I've restored so many boats, it's time to simply enjoy riding in one," he shares.

JOE FISHER (COCOA BEACH, FLORIDA) displayed a 1947 Chris-Craft Deluxe Runabout that simply glistened in the Florida sun. "We bought the boat in 1984 and spent two years restoring it, and my family has used it as a regular ride, as we live on the water," Fisher says. He and his family fish offshore in a Grady-White fishing boat and also own 22 antique outboards with a focus on antique racing boats. Fisher is also the current vice president of the Florida chapter of the Antique Outboard Motor Club.

Do you want to explore more, and perhaps get involved? Here's where to start:

ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC BOAT SOCIETY
acbs.org

SUNNYLAND CHAPTER, ACBS
acbs-sunnyland.org

ANTIQUE OUTBOARD MOTOR CLUB
aomci.org

FLORIDA CHAPTER, AOMCI
flaomci.org

CLASSIC ENTHUSIASM Lou Ronca talks to a fellow Century Boats enthusiast as he waxes his newest ride to get ready for the day (above). Joe Fisher, VP of the Florida chapter of the Antique Outboard Club, poses with his 1947 Chris-Craft inboard runabout (below).

ONE AND ONLY Ever the family man, enthusiast George Emmanuel stands aboard his pristine 1956 Chris-Craft Sportsman, which he affectionately named *Muffet* after his beloved wife.

GEORGE AND WESLEY EMMANUEL (GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA), a father-son duo, are both very active members of the Florida chapter of the Antique Outboard Motor Club. George is the current president, and Wesley is on the board of directors. Both brought picture-perfect inboard wooden runabouts to display at the Sunnyland show. George's ride is a 1956 Chris-Craft Sportsman that he bought in 2000 and restored over 10 years. He also runs an aluminum Crestliner with his antique outboards. He got his start "growing up with my dad's 30-foot Chris-Craft Sea Skiff, so these boats have been in my blood since childhood."

Wesley's rig is a 1958 Chris-Craft Cavalier 15-footer that he's owned for just a few years. He purchased it at the encouragement of his girlfriend. "My dad bought this boat in the early '80s, and as a kid, I helped him restore it," he notes. "After 17 years, he sold it, and in 2023, I bought it back. We've really enjoyed having it back in the family." Wesley's redone the decks and transom, and plans are to refinish the hull sides and engine box in the coming months. He uses this boat regularly, cruising and skiing on local lakes in Gainesville.

CASEY LYNN (QUINCY, FLORIDA) grew up as a marine technician in the Keys and worked for 22 years at Outboard Marine Corporation (Johnson/Evinrude) as an engineer and field-service representative. "It was natural for me to be involved in restoring and enjoying vintage outboard runabouts as I got older," Lynn says. "Now, in my retirement, I can work on and enjoy these boats full time." Lynn's restored 1960 Glasspar G-3 sport boat is powered by a matching 1960 Evinrude 75 hp V-4 outboard; he and his wife, Lesa, finished up the restoration in 2023 with new bottom, transom and floor. Together they own eight vintage rigs and attend most, if not all, AOMCI events throughout Florida. Their G-3 is a reliable and beautiful ride whether it's a short hop or a long river run.

GOLDEN AGE Former Outboard Marine Corporation/Bombardier Recreational Products service representative Casey Lynn enjoys his Glasspar G-3 runabout in his retirement days.

By Jim Hendricks

AFFORDABLE BOAT-SECURITY SYSTEMS

Monitoring your boat from afar is easier than ever, thanks to increasingly affordable and compact app-based systems that update you on the condition and location of your unattended boat, no matter how many miles separate you from your vessel.

All it takes is a few clicks on your mobile phone to get an update on your boat's vital signs, and most will immediately alert you through the app should a sensor—such as a motion detector or a high-bilge-water sensor—be triggered, giving you time to get to your boat or call someone close by to check it out.

Systems can also send you a reminder about scheduled maintenance to keep your boat in top working order. Not only are prices decreasing, but hardware is increasingly compact and uses wireless sensors that are easy to install. Here are examples such systems.

SKYHAWK OVERSEA

Practical aboard just about any size boat, the Skyhawk Oversea system is affordable and simple to install because all of the components are battery powered. At the heart of Skyhawk Oversea is a compact wireless hub that provides the location of the boat on demand and monitors vessel bearing to detect movement using the free Oversea app on a mobile device from just about anywhere.

Oversea offers a network of wireless sensors to monitor bilge-pump activity, battery voltage, shore power, temperature, humidity, water, motion, door entry and sound (so you know if someone is clambering about on your boat).

Skyhawk
Oversea
POWER
SYSTEM CHECK
THIS SIDE UP
Hub

As indicated earlier, the sensors, as well as the hub, are all self-powered by standard replaceable batteries for continuous year-round monitoring with no drain on the boat's batteries or any special onboard wiring. All alerts and data come to the Oversea app via a cellular network. Starting at $299.99 for the hub only, monthly cellular service subscription starts at $14.99 for the hub only with additional plans available; oversea.boats.

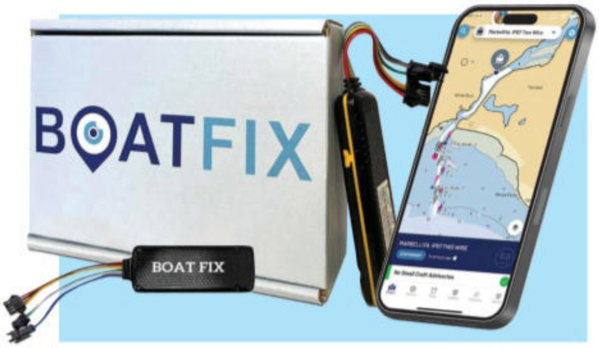
SIREN 3 CONNECTED BOAT SYSTEM

The compact and affordable new Siren 3 Connected Boat System security, monitoring, control and maintenance system is designed for small to midsize outboard-powered boats, such as runabouts, pontoon boats, bass boats, walleye boats, bay boats, flats skiffs, and more. Boaters use the free Siren Connected Boat app to confirm and track the boat's location and monitor systems such as battery status, bilge-water level, bilge-pump activity, and much more.

Siren 3 supports up to six wireless sensors through SirenWave, a proprietary communication protocol that provides a fast, reliable and secure connection. It also features a new internal-antenna design, which reduces the amount of space needed on smaller boats. Siren 3 features built-in NMEA-2000 connectivity that enables remote digital switching for the ability to turn on cabin lights, switch on air conditioning, or spool up a gyrostabilizer—to name just a few features—from virtually anywhere and at any time.

Siren 3 also connects with the Yamaha CommandLink network on Yamaha mechanical engines from 300 hp up, and can provide reminders to owners regarding scheduled maintenance. Starting at $299 for the hardware, with an annual cellular service subscription starting at $225; sirenmarine.com.

PHOTOS: (FROM TOP) COURTESY SIREN MARINE, COURTESY OVERSEA, COURTESY BOATFIX



BOATFIX: MORE THAN SECURITY

BoatFix goes beyond monitoring. It includes access to tech-savvy personnel by phone 24/7 to help you troubleshoot boat issues.

BoatFix is designed to be included on new boats, and it is free for up to three years to the owner after the boat purchase. After that time period, it requires a $179 annual subscription to continue the service.

The system requires no hardware for the service. However, BoatFix offers accessory devices to remotely monitor, track, and report your vessel's vital signs such as location, onboard voltage, and bilge-pump cycles. The BoatFix Pro 2.0 app provides a view of your vessel's location and geofence region, records trips, and helps set routes via web-based mapping. It also gives fast access to towing services, and assists in communicating with concierge services for on-location repairs. Visit boatfix.com.

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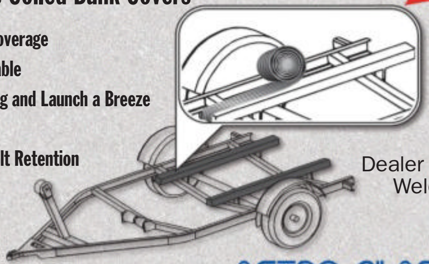

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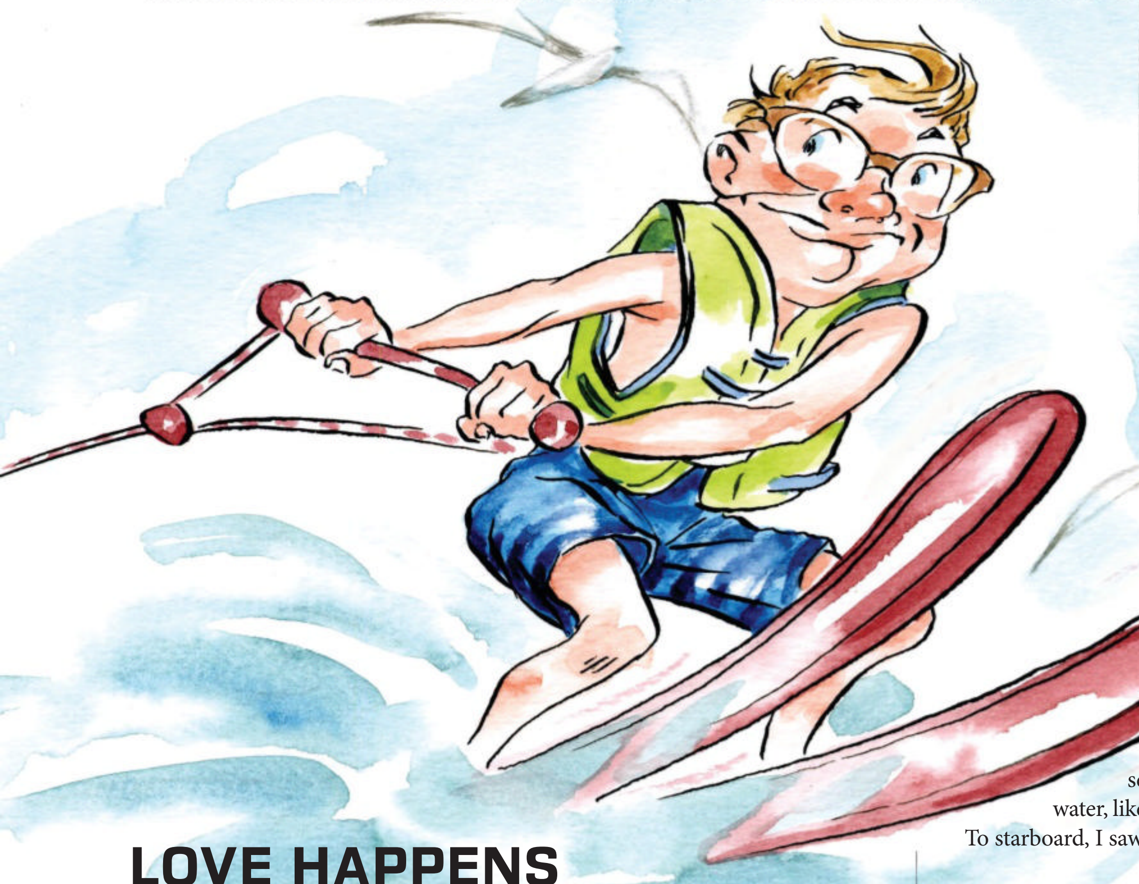

LOVE HAPPENS

How did you fall in love with boating?

I was probably a preteen when my father and I were guests of the older son of family friends. The son owned a fast, gold metal-flake speedboat, probably a Glastron. On its transom hung a towering pair of 100 hp Mercs. We spent an afternoon on Green Lake just zooming around, hunting for other speedboats to race. We never lost one of those impromptu speed trials, even to the guy in something called a Donzi. This introduced me to the thrill of speed for speed's sake on a venue where there was no speed limit. Freedom, in other words.

I was in high school when I got invited to spend a summer afternoon at a classmate's family lake cottage. There was a tri-hull runabout on the lift, and our host knew how to drive the boat, so she proposed that five or six of us cast off for a little water-skiing. I had never been towed behind a boat and was quite proud that I got up on my first try. Did a little sashay across the wakes, just to show off. When my turn was over, I retired to a cockpit full of happy, smiling girls in swimsuits, including our captain, a tall redhead I would pursue for years. Does life get any better? Not when you're a 16-year-old boy.

Fast-forward about a decade. I've, quite improbably, joined the staff at *Boating* magazine; the boy-wonder assistant editor from Wisconsin lands in Manhattan. I soon find myself in the cockpit of a 24-foot center-console, heading out Government Cut at dawn for a run to Bimini for a boat-test session following the Miami Boat Show. For my first journey on salt water, I was paired with a real salt: the magazine's editor, Doug Schryver. Soon enough, we were crossing the Gulf Stream and some big seas. I was instructed to steer on course while Doug throttled the single Mercury outboard as we climbed and descended thick swells. At one point, I recall looking to port and seeing nothing but a wall of green water, like I could touch it with my elbow. To starboard, I saw nothing but air. I felt like I was in a Hemingway story, or an episode of *Victory at Sea*. We arrived soaked to the skin, but I was thrilled and filled with newfound confidence.

At one point, I recall looking to port and seeing nothing but a wall of green water, like I could touch it with my elbow. To starboard, I saw nothing but air. I felt like I was in a Hemingway story, or an episode of *Victory at Sea*.

I landed my first job in the boat business completely by accident, answering a blind ad that turned out to be for a PR position at OMC/Evinrude/Johnson. When I worked at OMC, I had a colleague who, as a teenager, ran a 13-foot Speedliner solo from his home on Long Island to Miami to attend school. He had the boat but did not have a car. That's passion! I've never felt the romantic devotion to the water that I saw in that guy. But, perhaps surprisingly, boating has defined my life. Lucky, huh?

ILLUSTRATION: TIM BOWER; PHOTO: MABEL PLUEDDEMAN

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